

# Beauty in Distress. A TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the Theatre  
in *Little Lincolns-Inn-Fields.*

By His Majesty's Servants.

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Written by Mr. *Motteux.*

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With a Discourse of the  
*Lawfulness & Unlawfulness of Plays,*

Lately written in *French* by the Learned Father *Cas-  
faro*, Divinity-Professor at *Paris.*

Sent in a Letter to the Author  
*By a Divine of the Church of England.*

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L O N D O N,

Printed for *Daniel Brown*, at the *Black Swan and Bible* without *Temple-  
bar*; and *Rich. Parker* at the *Unicorn* under the *Piazza* of the *Royal  
Exchange.* 1698.

There is newly published, *The Usefulness of the Stage*, to the Happiness of Mankind  
To Government, and To Religion. Occasioned by a late Book, written by *Jeremy  
Collier*, M. A. By Mr. *Dennis.* Printed for *Rich. Parker.*

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У О Г В О А



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To the Honourable  
*Henry Heveningham, Esq;*

S I R,

**A**S Beauty in Distress has always found Protection from the Generous and the Brave, to throw herself into honorable Hands and hospitable Walls, she seeks a Patron here ; fearless even of greater Dangers than those she has happily escap'd, when Your condescending Goodness emboldens her to aspire to Favours which her humble Thoughts wou'd scarce permit her to expect. But while my fair Unfortunate rests secure under so auspicious a Roof, my unhappier Hero will inevitably be lost there : He'll find that Sweetness of Temper, that Gracefulness, that Tenderness of Soul, and every lovely Qualification so much above him, that, where he enters with Pride, he will sit down with Envy. He will find You dividing your equally grateful Conversation betwixt the gravity of the Wise, the gayety of the Witty, and the easy sprightliness of the Fair, and entertaining the Solid, the Ingenious and the Beauteous, so as to improve the first, cheer the second, and charm the last. For, as none seems to have more studied the Art of pleasing those whom the Best deserving wou'd please, so a particular Genius of Gallantry distinguishes You from most of those who make any considerable Figure among the *Beau monde*. You wisely consider that by such a Spirit the best Men

have been inspir'd with Sentiments productive of the noblest Actions, and 'tis chiefly owing to such Examples as Your self, that 'tis kept up in this degenerating Age, when so many seem fondest of estranging themselves from the most harmless Recreations and Improvements. More happy those, who, like You, are convinc'd, that, by a pleasing Converse with the other Sex, ours insensibly gains that graceful Deportment, that elegant Politeness, and those Accomplishments which the ingenious Fair seldom fail to impart more effectually than the most lavish Nature itself, and even that Love of Glory, which a desire to please 'em awakes or rather inspires in Hearts. In that engaging Society, Learning soon loses its Pedantry, Youth its Indiscretion, and Bravery its Roughness; and Man becomes with Ease and Pleasure an absolute Master of those Graces that change a rude Mass into a perfect Gentleman. But I ought not to dwell on the Praise of others, while I have so fair an opportunity to enlarge on Yours. The Character which You have still maintain'd, is what the ablest Pens might be ambitious of Drawing; but what Colours of Speech shall Rethoric, or Poetry it self, that bolder Painting, use, to do Justice to the great Original? If like too many others you had need to borrow some Glory from the reflected Lustre of your Ancestry, the remotest Ages wou'd supply you with hereditary Marks of Honor, while we trace up Yours long before the Conquest, and find among the many noble Branches of so illustrious a Family, some of your Ancestors enriching your Scutcheon in the Holy Wars by extraordinary Achievements of Honour, and the acquisition of Laurels before the Walls of *Jerusalem*; and one particularly, killing in single Combat the Champion of the *Saracens* before the King and the whole Army, to the immortal Glory of his Name and Country.

But we need not look so far back as to Chronicles and Monuments, when we have living Objects of Admiration;

miration before us Artful Painters, when they wou'd copy such, endeavour to set every Perfection in its truest light, and either to veil, extenuate, or throw into shades those defects of which Nature is so seldom free; they strive to heighten every grace, yet so as to preserve the original Likeness, and give an advantageous Idea of what they represent. While thus they flatter Nature, I could only wish the first of these Talents, conscious that I should have no occasion to exert the others, to give a just Idea of your Accomplishments. But extraordinary Qualifications are yet more uneasily describ'd to the Eyes of the Mind, than extraordinary Features to those of the Body; and I have not so much of the Author, but that a Sense of Modesty and my own Incapacity, check my presumptuous Desires. Besides, even Truth it self begins to cease to please the most deserving, when it makes too bold with their Praise; and the illnatur'd World is apt to term that Flattery, which often is but a just Acknowledgment, and the Incentive, and only Reward of Vertue in this World; the want of Merit of most Men making 'em displeased to hear the Worth of others, and their Envy and uncharitable Thoughts charging the fairest and most lively Complexions with using Artifice. For my part, I hope never to seem so imprudent as to debase with Flattery the real Worth which I wou'd extol; I know that thus to add imaginary Virtue to the true, is like the injudicious laying paint on a good Face, where some natural Beauty is wanting, this only serves to disgrace the other Charms, and make Deformity more conspicuous. Yet, without so much as attempting a slight Sketch of your particular Endowments, (tho most Poetical Dedications have more of the Picture than of the Epistle) to whom shou'd aspiring writers make their Court, but such as You, by whose countenancing Generosity, Poetry, Music, and other ingenious Arts are encourag'd? You, whose known Zeal for those whom you espouse, and Humanity to all the world, make every one fond of sharing your Smiles. 'Tis as You influence those whom we are proudest of

pleasing,

pleasing, that even our most labour'd Pieces must expect to be receiv'd ; and as You supply us with Instructions and Examples, that we are enabled to succeed. 'Tis not from the vulgar Order of men that we must learn to write to the Heart, to touch the Soul, to trifle agreeably, be witty without Affectation, solid without Dulness, lofty without Bombast, and familiar without Meanness.

But I ought to finish this Address, lest I usurp some of those Moments which are due to your more entertaining Diversions ; and as the Business of this Epistle is not more to secure to this Tragedy the Honour of your Patronage, than to assure You of the deep Respect of the Author, I cannot conclude better than with a Solemn Protestation of being eternally, with the utmost Veneration,

*Your most humble and*

*Most obedient Servant,*

**Peter Motteux.**

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**T H E**

# The PREFACE.

I Have no reason to complain of the Reception which this Tragedy met with, tho it appear'd first at a time not very favourable to Compossures of this kind, and divested of all the things that now recommend a Play most to the Liking of the Many. For it has no Singing, no Dancing, no mixture of Comedy, no Mirth, no change of Scene, no rich Dresses, no Show, no Rants, no Similies, no Battle, no Killing on the Stage, no Ghost, no Prodigy; and, what's yet more, no Smut, no Profaneness, nor Immorality. Besides, 'tis a single Plot, and the whole Story, notwithstanding the great number of Turns in it, is transfacted on one individual spot of ground, and in no more Time than the Representation takes up, which is an uncommon Confinement; the rather if you consider that the Scenes are unbroken, no two and two coming on to talk and then go out meerly because they had no more to say. Here I study'd to bring the Actors to that Place only because they have Business there, and make 'em go away because their concerns call for them elsewhere, yet never without leaving some Actor on, from the Beginning to the End of the Act. Add to this the Confinement in writing to a Moral, the whole design tending to make good the last line in the Poem; and the Difficulty in cloathing a Fiction like this with words that may keep up the dignity of Verse, while the Tale requires all the Freedom and natural Turn of Prose.

I had the satisfaction of seeing the Audience pleasingly surpriz'd by the Turns in the Plot; and if, as I am willing to believe, they came on somewhat too fast, 'tis a Fault which I can wish ease avoid another time. Perhaps they only seem so now, because several things were left out, to make the Play the shorter.

Such as it is, it has had the honour of forcing Tears from the fairest Eyes, and what I cannot too thankfully and humbly acknowledge, of being the happy occasion of recommending me to Her Royal Highnesses Bounty; Her Princely Gift alone outweighing the Benefit of a sixth Representation: This most excellent and pious Princess being pleas'd to encourage thus an inoffensive Writer, doubtless that he may still keep to strict Morality, even in the circumstances of a melancholic Fortune.

I might say something now of the present Disputes about the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of the Stage, but refer you to the following Letter, which (as the Booksellers, who are men of fair and unquestion'd Reputation, and above countenancing any little trick, can testify) was really writ by a worthy Divine of the Church of England.

I me.



I cannot be too cautious ; for I find my uninterrupted good success has rais'd me Enemies. But, since 'tis common for better Pens than my self to be abus'd by the worst, as long as my Writings continue to be as well receiv'd as they have been from the first, I can calmly leave Envy and Detraction in their deserv'd Obscurity.

I only beg leave to add the following lines, out of a Poem which before I wrote for the Stage I inscrib'd to a reverend Clergyman: As they were then my sentiments, they are, and I hope will be still

### *The Poet's Character of himself.*

To what hard Fate a Muse her Vot'ries binds,  
Still forc'd by need to rack their weary'd minds ;  
To sooth a dull, ungrateful, impious age,  
Th' eternal Drudges of the Press and Stage ;  
This moment baffled, thoughtless of the past,  
Still rich in hopes, and wretched to the last ;  
Inspir'd by Fits, but oftner dull than wise,  
And fond of Fame, which yet they sacrifice !

Ah, cruel Fortune, Tyrant of my Life,  
To Fools so kind, with Poets still at strife,  
Thou mayst constrain thy Slave to lose his right  
To dear-bought Fame, the Poet's best delight ;  
But never shall my dearer Honour be,  
Thou Prostitute, a Prostitute to thee.  
Oh, let me ne're prophane celestial Fire,  
Quench sacred Flames, or kindle loose Desire ;  
Or, to base Flatt'ring and Detraction bent,  
Poyson the Weak, and stab the Innocent.

Oh! that my Muse in some Retreat might sing  
Britain's great Ruler, and Heav'n's greater King !  
Ev'n our wing'd Brother-Poets of the Grove  
Strive here below to rival those above.  
Each morning they their warbling voices raise,  
Inspir'd by Nature, Nature's God to praise.  
The lab'ring Swain by them beguiles his Cares,  
Yet by his Arts, their callow Brood insnares ;  
Then, blinded, taught t' unlearn their native strain,  
And cag'd for life, the wretches sing for Grain.

So 'tis with us, at first by Nature free,  
Our Lays were sacred as our Deity :  
But by a selfish World enslav'd, while young,  
Blinded by Vice, we're taught a meaner Song:  
Kept close and bare, we ne're enjoy the Spring,  
The Town our Cage, where we must starve or sing.

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A LETTER  
FROM A  
Divine of the CHURCH of ENGLAND,  
To the Author of the TRAGEDY call'd,  
*BEAUTY in DISTRESS,*  
Concerning the Lawfulness and Unlawfulness of Plays.

S I R,  
**S**INCE you have been pleas'd to desire my Opinion about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of writing Plays for the Stage, I shall give it you with all the Freedom and Impartiality which becomes one of my Function. Upon reflecting on the present Management of our Theaters, on the Actions, Humors, and Characters which are daily represented there, which are for the most part so Leud and Immodest, as to tend very much to the debauching the Youth and Gentry of our English Nation; I might very well dissuade you from giving any Countenance to such unmanly Practices, by offering any of your Works to the service of the Stage.

But tho the Theatral Representations are become an Offence and Scandal to most, yet I am not of their Mind, who think Plays are absolutely unlawful, and the best way to Reform is wholly to suppress them: For certainly they might be of very great use, not only for the Diversion and Pleasure, but also for the correction and information of Mankind. 'Tis no Crime to eat or drink, but the Sin lies in the excessive and immoderate Use, or rather abuse of those things which we either eat or drink: the Case is much the same with Plays. In their own Nature they are innocent and harmless Diversions; but then indeed they become sinful and unlawful, to be made, acted, or seen, when they transgress the bounds of Virtue and Religion; shock our Nature, put our Modesty to the blush; imprint nauseous and unbecoming Images on our Minds; and in a word, when they are such as are a scandal to the Author, and an offence to the Audience.



I am not willing (Sir) to believe so hardly of the Age, (tho 'tis bad enough in all Conscience) but that most of the Persons who frequent the Theatres, would be as well pleas'd to see a Play of Decorum and Modesty acted, as they would be to see a Jew and Atheistical Comedy. 'Tis upon this consideration that I am willing to encourage you in your design of writing Plays for the Stage; for you have too much Prudence, Honour, and Conscience, to subject the sacred Nine to base and servile ends. 'Tis to be hop'd that such as you may be a means of reforming the Abuses of the Stage, and of shewing the World that a Poet may be a man of Sense and Parts, without renouncing his Virtue.

I shall not trouble you at present with any farther Thoughts of my own, but will here give you the sentiments of a very judicious Divine upon this Subject. It seems he was consulted by a Gentleman, whether Plays were lawful or not, and whether he might in Conscience exercise his Parts that way: To this the Divine replies in the ensuing Letter, shewing how far Plays are lawful and necessary, and when they become unlawful and sinful; the Resolution of this will, I presume, come up to your Purpose.

### The LETTER is as follows.

S I R,

I Have avoided as much as I could giving you my Opinion in writing about Plays, considering the niceness of the Subject, and my own Incapacity: But since you press me still to cure you of that scrupulous Fear which lies upon your Mind, I must pass over those two Difficulties, chusing rather to expose my self on your account, than not to ease you of your Doubts. In truth, Sir, the more I examine the Holy Fathers, the more I read the Divines, and consult the Casuists, the less able I find my self to determin any thing in this matter. I had no sooner found something in favour of the Drama among the Schoolmen, who are almost all of them for allowing it, but I perceiv'd my self surrounded with abundance of passages out of the Councils and the Fathers, who have all of them declaim'd against publick Shows.

This Question would have been soon determin'd, if the Holy Scripture had said any thing about it. But as Tertullian very well observes, We no where find that we are as expressly forbidden in Scripture to go to the Circus and Theatre, to see the fightings of Gladiators, or be assisting in any Show, as we are forbid to worship Idols, or the being guilty of Murder, Treason and Adultery. If you read the Scriptures over and over, you will never meet with any express and particular precept against Plays. The Fathers assert that we cannot in Conscience be any ways assisting to the Drama; the Schoolmen maintain the contrary: Let us therefore endeavour to make use of St.

Cyprian's

*Cyprian's Rule*, who says, *That Reason is to be heard where Holy Writ is silent*; and let us try to reconcile the conclusions of the Divines with the determination of the Fathers of the Church.

But because 'tis a very nice Point, and the question consists in reconciling them together, I will not advance any thing of my own Sentiments, but bring *St. Thomas Aquinas* to speak for me; who being on one side a very Religious Father, and Holy Doctor of the Church, and on the other side, the Angel of the School, the Master and Head of all the Divines, seems to me the most proper of any to reconcile the disagreeing Opinions of both parties. In the second part of his *Summs*, among others, he starts this Question, What we ought to think of Sports and Diversions? And he returns in answer to himself, That provided they be moderate, he does not only not think them sinful, but in some measure good and conformable to that Virtue which *Aristotle* styles *Eutrapelia*, whose business 'tis to set just bounds to our Pleasures. The reason which he alledges for it is this, That a man being fatigu'd by the serious actions of Life, has need of an agreeable Refreshment, which he can find no where so well as in Plays: and to back his Opinion, that great Casuist produces that of *St. Augustin* in his own words, "In short, I would have you take care of your self, for 'tis the part of a Wise man, sometimes to unbend his Mind which is too intent upon his Business.

"Now, continues *St. Thomas*, How can this relaxation of the Mind be effected, if not by diverting Words or Actions? 'Tis not therefore sinful or unbecoming a wise and virtuous Man, to allow himself some innocent Pleasures. This holy Doctor does even in some sort reckon it a Sin to refrain from Diversion; "Because (says he) whatever is contrary to Reason, is vicious; now 'tis contrary to Reason that a man should be so unfociable and hard upon others, as to oppose their innocent Pleasures, never to bear a part in their Diversions, or contribute to 'em by his Words or Actions. Therefore *Seneca* had a great deal of reason to say upon this occasion, Demean your selves in your Conversation with so much Prudence and Discretion, that none may charge you with being morose, or despise you as one unfit for human Converse: for 'tis a Vice to fall out with all Mankind, and thus to be imputed a morose and salvage Creature.

'Tis easy, Sir, to determine from those words of that Father, that under the general term of Recreations he comprehends the *Drama*, when he says, that this unbending of the Mind, which is a Virtue, is perform'd by diverting Words and Actions. Now what is more proper and peculiar to Plays than this, since they only consist in jocosé and witty Words and Actions, such as produce delight

and recreate the mind ? I do not think you will find in any other Diversion, Words and Actions thus united together: But hearken, I beseech you, once more to this great Scholar.

“ It seems (says he) as if those Players who spend their whole lives on the Stage, did transgress the bounds of innocent Diversion. If then excessive Diversion be a Sin (as certainly 'tis) the Players are in a state of Sin; and so likewise are all those who assist at Stage-representations, and they who give any thing to them are, as it were, Abettors of their Sin; which seems to be false; for we read in the Lives of the Fathers, that one day it was reveal'd to St. *Paphnutius*, That in the other Life he should not arrive to a higher degree of Glory than a certain Player.

If the Objection which St. *Thomas* here starts be nice, his Answer is as delicate and solid. “ Diversion (replies this excellent Doctor) being therefore necessary for the comfort of human Life, we may appoint several Employments for this very end, which are lawful. Thus the Employment of Players being established to afford men an honest Recreation, has nothing in it, in my mind, which deserves to be prohibited; and I do not look upon them to be in a state of Sin, provided they make use of this sort of Recreation with moderation, that is, provided they neither speak nor act any thing which is unlawful; mix nothing that is Sacred with Profane, and never act in a prohibited time. And tho they may have no other employment of Life, with respect to other Men, yet with respect to themselves and to God, they have other very serious Employments, such as when they pray to God, govern their Passions, and give Alms to the Poor. From hence I conclude, that those who in moderation pay or assist them are guilty of no Sin, but do an act of justice, since they only give them the reward of their labour. But if any one should squander away his whole Estate upon them, or countenance Players who act after a scandalous and unlawful way, I make no question but that he sins, and gives them encouragement to sin; and 'tis in this sense that St. *Augustin's* words are to be taken, when he says, *That to give one's Estate away to Players, is rather a Vice than a Virtue.*

To prove that 'tis only the Excess which ought to be condemned in all Sports and Diversions, and that the holy Fathers had no other design in declaiming against Plays, St. *Thomas* explains what he means by Excess, and lays it down as an indispensable Maxim, That in every thing which may be regulated according to Reason, that which transgresses this Rule is to be reckon'd superfluous, and that which does not come up to it defective. “ Now, continues he, diverting Words and Actions may be regulated according to Reason.

“ son:

" son : The Excess therefore in them is, when they do not agree to  
 " this Rule, or are defective by the Circumstances which ought to  
 " be applied to them. 'Tis upon this Maxim that we ought to re-  
 turn answer to the Authorities of the Fathers of the Church, since  
 according to St. *Thomas*, they declaim only against the Excess in  
 Plays, and we shall offer nothing on this subject, but in imitation  
 of this great Doctor, who, as his way was, applying to all the Fa-  
 thers the Answer which he gives to only one, answers St. *Crisostom*  
 in this manner. That eloquent Father had said, that it was not  
 God who was the Author of Sports, but the Devil ; and the more  
 to back what he had advanc'd, produc'd this passage out of ho-  
 ly Writ ; *The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.* But  
 St. *Thomas* is for having those words of the great *Crisostom*, to be un-  
 derstood of excessive and immoderate Sports ; and he adds, That Ex-  
 cess in play is a foolish pleasure, stil'd by St. *Gregory* the Daughter of  
 Gluttony and Sin ; and that in this sense it is written, that *the people*  
*sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.* This is the Answer  
 which we are to make to whatever may be objected against us out of  
 the Fathers, and the rather, because in examining them without pre-  
 judice, 'tis easy to perceive, that if they did declaim so much against  
 the *Drama*, it was only because in their times its Excess was crim-  
 inal and immoderate ; whereas had they seen it as 'tis now-a-days in  
*France*, conformable to good Manners and right Reason, they would  
 not have inveigh'd against it. But Plays as they were acted in the  
 time of our Forefathers, were so abominable and infamous, that those  
 Pious men could not but employ their greatest Zeal against a thing  
 which was so very offensive to the Church. For is it not the excess of  
 Plays, for instance, against which *Tertullian* cries out, when he says ;  
 " Let us not go to the Theatre, which is a particular Scene of Im-  
 " modesty and Debauchery, where nothing is lik'd but what is dis-  
 " approv'd elsewhere ; and what is thought most excellent, is com-  
 " monly what is infamous and lewd. A Player, for instance, acts  
 " there with the most shameful and naked Gestures ; Women for-  
 " getting the modesty of their Sex, dare do that on the Stage, and  
 " in the view of all the World, which others would blush to com-  
 " mit at home where no body could see them. There they repre-  
 " sent the Rape of Virgins, the infamous Victims of publick De-  
 " bauchery ; so much the more wretched, because expos'd to the  
 " view of such Women as are suppos'd to be ignorant of such Licen-  
 " tiousness. They are there made the subject of the young mens  
 " mirth ; there you are directed to the place where they prostitute  
 " themselves ; there they tell you how much they get by their infa-  
 " mous Trade, and there in a word those Strumpets are commend-

“ ed in the presence of those who ought to be ignorant of all those  
 “ things. I say nothing, adds this Father, of what ought to be buried in eternal silence, for fear that by barely mentioning such  
 “ horrid Actions, I should in some measure be guilty of them.

But the other Fathers are not so reserv'd as he, and make no scruple to discover all they know about it. You must not imagine that I am ambitious of quoting all they have said: Those matters which are so freely handled in another Language, might prove offensive in ours; therefore I will only leave you to guess what Exorbitances they have mention'd, by some of those lesser Infamies of which I dare give an account out of their Writings.

*Salvian* was afraid to say any thing about it: “ Who (says he)  
 “ can treat of those shameful Representations, those dishonest  
 “ Speeches, and of those lascivious and immodest Actions, the enormity and offence of which are discoverable by that restraint  
 “ which they in their own nature impose upon us not to rehearse  
 “ them?

*Laſtantius* is not so reserv'd, his most favourable Thoughts about it are these. “ To what end do those impudent Actions of the  
 “ Players tend, but to debauch the Youth of the Age? Their effeminate Bodies in Womens dresses, represent the most lascivious  
 “ Gestures of the most dissolute. And a little lower, he says,  
 “ From the licentiousness of Speech, they proceed to that of Action: they, at the instance of the people, strip, debauch'd Women  
 “ stark naked on the publick Theatre, &c. Pray be you Judge, whether what this Father adds, can be acceptable to modesty.

*St. Cyprian*, who *ex professo* composed a Book of publick Shows, describes at large all the infamous Practices there. We may also read something of that abominable Custom of their appearing naked on the Theatres, in *St. Chrysostom*, *St. Jerom*, and *St. Augustin*. The first of these does not scruple comparing those of his time who went to Plays to *David*, who took pleasure in seeing *Bathsheba* naked in her Bath; and saying that the Theatre is the Rendezvous of all manner of Debaucheries, that 'tis full of Impudence, Abomination, and Impiety. A more modern Writer (*viz. Alexander ab Alexandro*) describing the Shows of the *Antients*, and especially their *Bacchanalia*, gives us such horrible Pictures of their publick Infamies and Prostitutions, that I should tremble to repeat them. You may imagin, *Sir*, there could be nothing of good in them, since the infamous *Heliogabalus* was the Author of some of them. But lest you should suppose that Plays were much the same as they are now; and that 'twas only to dissuade the faithful from frequenting the Stage, that the Fathers represented it in such frightful Colours; let



Let us consult profane Authors. *Valerius Maximus*, speaking of the detestable Custom which the Romans had, of exposing upon the Theatre the naked Bodies of debauch'd Women, and the naked Bodies of young Boys, relates of *M. P. Cato*, that he being one day at those sights, and understanding by his Favourite *Favonius*, that out of the Respect which they bore to him, the People were ashamed to desire the Players should appear naked on the Theatre; this great man withdrew, that he might not by his presence hinder that which was so customary. *Seneca* gives us the same Account of *Cato*, and commends him for his being unwilling to see those debauch'd Women naked. I dare not repeat to you the words of *Lampridius*, because they are too fulsome, when he says, that the Emperor *Heliogabalus*, who in a Play represented *Venus*, showed himself all naked upon the Stage with the utmost signs of Impudence. We also find that the public Shows of the Antients were as dreadfully impious, as they were immoral. "There (says *St. Chrysostom*) they blaspheme the Name of God, and no sooner have the Players vented a blasphemous Expression, but a loud Applause follows. This is what oblig'd the third Council of *Carthage* by a Canon to condemn Players as Blasphemers: Let not the Laicks themselves be present at the Shows, for it has been always unlawful for any Christian to go into the Company of Blasphemers.

Now who would not cry down the Stage, if it were so full of Immorality and Profaneness? There is no need of being one of the Fathers, the Light of Nature is sufficient to condemn so great an Excess. Thus we read in *St. Chrysostom*, "That certain Barbarians having heard of those Theatral Plays, express'd themselves in those terms worthy of the greatest Philosophers, viz. 'Tis fit that the Romans, when they invented this kind of Pleasures, should be look'd upon as Persons who had neither Wives nor Children. And *Alcibiades* among other things is commended for having cast a certain Comedian, nam'd *Eupolis*, into the Sea, for being so impudent as to repeat some infamous Verses in his presence, adding at his Punishment this Expression, Thou hast plung'd me often in the debaucheries of the Stage, and for once I will plunge thee into the depths of the Sea.

You may easily perceive, Sir, that all those passages out of the Fathers, and a thousand others which I could produce out of them against Stage-Plays, prove nothing against the Drama as it now stands in France. It would be superfluous to stand making a Comparison between the one and the other; I desire that you would only take notice, that far from weakning the Doctrine of *St. Thomas*, all that has been hitherto alledg'd serves only to strengthen it: For 'tis only  
against

against the Excess of the Stage that the Fathers appear'd so zealous, whereas if they had found it divested of those unhappy Circumstances which then attended it, they would have been of *St. Thomas's* Opinion, and at least have look'd upon it as indifferent.

I thought it proper to relate all this to you before I ventur'd to discover my own Thoughts on this Subject; and upon those indisputable Principles which I have laid down, I affirm, that in my Judgment, Plays in their own Nature, and taken in themselves, independent from any other Circumstance whether good or bad; ought to be reckon'd among the number of things purely indifferent. Upon due examination you will find it to be the Opinion even of *Tertullian* and *St. Cyprian*, the two who seem to declaim most against the *Drama*.

To begin with *Tertullian*, at the same time that he abominates the infamy of publick Shows, he starts this Objection to himself: "God" (says he) has made all things, and given them to men, and consequently they are all good, such as the *Circus*, Lions, Voices, &c. "What then makes the use of them unlawful? To this he answers, That 'tis true, all things were instituted by God, but that they were corrupted by the evil Spirit: That Iron, for instance, is as much God's Creature as Plants and Angels; that notwithstanding this, God did not make these Creatures to be instruments of Murder, Poison, and Magick, tho men by their Wickedness deprave them to those Uses; and that what renders a great many things evil, which in their own nature are indifferent, is not their Institution but Corruption. From hence, if we apply this way of arguing to publick Shows, it follows, that consider'd in their own nature, they are as harmless as Angels, Plants, and Iron; but that 'tis the evil Spirit that has chang'd, perverted, and spoil'd 'em. You see then that *Tertullian* has reckon'd Stage-Plays among indifferent Actions, and that what he condemns in them is only the Excess.

*St. Cyprian*, speaking of *David's* dancing before the Ark, owns that there is no harm in dancing or singing; but yet, says he, this is no excuse for Christians, who are present at those lascivious Dances and impure Songs, which are in honour of Idols. Whence 'tis easy for you to infer, that this holy Doctor does not absolutely condemn Dancing, Singing, Operas, and Comedies, but only those Shows that represented Fables after the lascivious manner of the Greeks and Romans, and which were celebrated in honour of Idols. This is likewise *St. Bonaventure's* Opinion, who says expressly, "That Shows" are good and lawful if they are attended with necessary Precautions and Circumstances. The great *Albertus* his Master taught him this Doctrine: and the words which I met with upon this Subject in *St. Antoninus*, Archbishop of Florence, are so pertinent that I cannot forbear



bear inserting them here. " The profession of a Comedian (says he) because it is useful for the Diversion of men which is requisite, is not forbidden in its own nature: from whence it follows, " that it is no less lawful to get one's Livelihood by this Art, &c. And in another place, " Comedy is a mixture of pleasant Speeches and Actions, for the Diversion of a man's self, or for that of another. If nothing is mix'd in it either unbecoming, or an Affront to God, or prejudicial to one's Neighbour, 'tis an effect of that Virtue which is call'd *Eurapelia*; for the Mind which is fatigu'd by internal Cares, as the Body is by external Labour, has as much need of Repose as the Body has of Nourishment. This Repose is procur'd by those kind of diverting Speeches and Actions which are call'd Plays. Can any thing, Sir, be said of greater weight in favour of Comedy? Yet he who says it, is a Man of undoubted sanctity: How comes it to pass that he does not declaim as loudly against it, as the Antients did? 'Tis because the *Drama* grows more correct and perfect every day; and I have observ'd in reading the Holy Fathers, that the nearer they come to our times, the more favourable they are to Plays, because the Stage was not so licentious as before. Thus likewise we see, that it is not prohibited by the Saint of our times, the great *Francis de Sales*, who might without dispute serve as a pattern to all Directors. And *Fontana de Ferrara* in his Institutes relates, That the famous Saint, *Charles Borromeus*, allow'd Stage-Plays in his Diocese, by an Order in the year 1583. yet upon condition, that before they were acted they should be revis'd and licens'd by his grand Vicar, for fear any thing which is immodest should be in them. This pious and learned Cardinal did then allow of modest Comedies, and condemn'd only the Immodest and Profane, as appears by the third Council which he held at *Milan* in the year 1572.

Beside this multitude of Testimonies which are in my favour, I might likewise form a strong Proof taken from the Words and Practice of the Holy Fathers in general, and observe that those who have cry'd out so mightily against the Stage, have been as violent in declaiming against playing at Cards, Dice, &c. They have inveigh'd against Banquets and Feasts, against Luxury and gaudy Dresses, against lofty Buildings, magnificent Houses, rich Furniture, rare Painting, &c. *St. Chrysostom* has whole Homilies upon this Subject: we find a particular Catalogue of them in the *Pedagogue* of *St. Clement Alexandrinus*: *St. Augustin* treats very largely of them in most of his Works, and particularly in his Letter to *Possidonium*. *St. Cyprian* quoted by the same *St. Augustin*, *St. Gregory*, in a word, all the Fathers have warmly de-

claim'd against the luxury and richness of Apparel; sometimes exciting us to follow the Example of *St. John Baptist*, who for the Austerity of his Life was so highly commended by our Saviour. And yet we find that they did not raise so many doubts of Conscience in mens Minds upon this score, as they did upon the account of Stage-Plays; and none made a scruple either of wearing Habits suitable to their Quality, nor of living at ease, provided they did it within the compass of Modesty and Moderation. Why then should we not extend this Indulgence to Shows, and affirm, that as the Reproaches of the Doctors of the Church are applicable to Luxury, Intemperance, and Prodigality, but not to the innocent and moderate use of the good things of this Life, so we may interpret their words of immoral and profane Plays, but not of those that do not transgress the Rules of Prudence and Morality?

“ To prove (says *Albertus Magnus*) that the Scripture does not condemn Plays, Dancing, and Shows, consider'd singly, and without those offensive Circumstances which make them condemnable; do not we read in *Exodus*, That *Miriam the Prophetess, the Sister of Aaron, took a Timbrel in her hand, and all the Women went out after her with Timbrels and with Dances*, *Exod. 15. 20*? Does not the Royal Prophet say (*Psal. 68. 25, 27.*) That *Benjamin* was among the Damsels who played with Timbrels? Nay, does not God himself, by the Mouth of *Jeremiah*, *Chap. 31. 4.* promise the Jews, that upon their return from *Chaldee*, they should play upon Timbrels, and go forth in the Dances of them that make merry? Therefore (concludes *Albertus Magnus*) Dances and Pleasures are not in themselves sinful or unlawful, but made so by the criminal Circumstances added to them: and I would not enjoin a Penitent to abstain from them, since God himself not only permits, but promises them. And indeed take away the Excess which may possibly creep into *Dramatick* Representations, and I know no harm in them: For 'tis a kind of speaking Picture, wherein are represented Histories or Fables for the Diversion, and very often for the Instruction of men.

Hitherto we find nothing amiss in the Design of the Stage; but perhaps its enemies will object, that it must needs be bad however, because 'tis prohibited. I protest, *Sir*, I never yet thought the Prohibition of any thing made it sinful, but on the contrary, that the Viciousness of it made it to be prohibited. But let us consult those places of Scripture which seem to forbid Plays, and such like Shows, and try to explain them, not as we please, but by the words of the greatest Doctors. *Albertus Magnus*, who has collected

lected all those Passages, shall give us the Explanation of them. The first which he mentions is that of *St. Paul*, who seems to reduce all those Sports to immodesty ; for the Apostle exhorting men to avoid that Sin, expresses himself thus, *1 Cor. 10.* As some of them fell into Impurity, of whom it is written, *The People sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.* The second is taken out of *Exodus, Chap. 32.* where we find that Dances were first invented before Idols ; and by this they prove that 'tis an idolatrous Institution, to excite men to impurity. The third is that of *Isaiab, Chap. 3.* who in the Name of God denounces great Threatnings against those kind of Sports ; *Because the Daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth Necks, and wanton Eyes, walking and tripping as they go, and making a tinkling with their Feet : Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the Head of the Daughters of Zion, &c.* And lastly, 'tis pretended that *St. Paul* includes all publick Sights in those famous words, *1 Thess. 5. 22. Abstain from all appearance of Evil.* But *Albertus Magnus* returns this Reply to all those Passages, " That Dancing, &c. which are not in their own nature evil, " may become so by being attended with those unhappy Circumstances which *St. Paul* is to be understood to speak of : That 'tis " false to assert that they never danc'd but before Idols ; and that " it has been done upon other occasions, witness *Miriam* the Sister " of *Moses* and *Aaron*, whom we formerly mention'd : That God " by the Mouth of his Prophet, reproves only those impudent Gestures, with which the dancing of the *Jews* was attended. And " lastly, That *St. Paul* forbids even the appearance of real Evil, and " not of that which may become so by Accident and bad Circumstances.

But you will say, If Plays are good in themselves, why are the Actors of them noted with Infamy in *Justinian's* Institutes ? But pray let me ask you a Question or two ; Does that Soldier sin who runs away in Battel for fear of being kill'd ? Or does a young Widow, who cannot live single, commit a mortal Sin by marrying a second Husband before her year is up ? and yet the same Book brands both of them with a note of Infamy, and a thousand other Persons whose Actions are not criminal. 'Tis therefore a very weak Consequence to prove the sinfulness of an Action, because 'tis noted as infamous : Suppose it true, that Players were infamous by acting on the Stage, I would fain know why the Youth of the Universities, and other Persons very prudent, and sometimes of the best Quality, who for their own Diversion, and without scandal act Parts in Play, are not as infamous as the common Players. I hope none will say, 'tis because the latter act to get by it, whereas the

others do it for their Diversion, for that is a very wretched Argument. Suppose any Action be evil in it self, what signifies it whether a Man gets by it or no? It will still be evil, and no Circumstance can alter its nature: So that as a perjur'd Man, or a Calumniator, branded with Infamy by the Law you cited, will be always infamous, let them be in what circumstances soever; so Plays cannot be represented upon any occasion or motive whatever, without incurring the stain of Infamy, which you say is cast upon it. But to understand the meaning of the Laws, 'tis requisite to have recourse to those Doctors who have expounded them. Pray see what the famous *Baldus* says on this Subject; "The Players who act in a modest way, either to divert themselves or please others, and who commit nothing against good Manners, are not to be reputed infamous. You perceive then according to this Commentator, that the Infamy falls only on those who act infamous Plays.

Since time changes every thing, Men of Equity ought to consider things in the time wherein they are. Were not the Physicians themselves turn'd out of *Rome* as infamous Persons? And in the esteem wherein now they are, is there the least sign of their Infamy remaining? Why then should any Reflection stick on so ingenious a Profession, which in *France* (and perhaps elsewhere) is become rather the School of Virtue than that of Vice? The reason why formerly Players were declar'd infamous, was the Infamy so predominant in the Plays which they acted, and the Infamy which they themselves added to it by their shameful way of acting. But now since that Reason is out of doors, without doubt its Consequences are abolish'd; and if any Consequences are to be drawn from it, 'tis that Plays being altogether unblameable, those who act them, provided they live honestly, ought not to be reckon'd among the number of dishonourable Persons. This is so far true, that the being a Player does not degrade any Man's Quality. *Floridor*, who is said to have been the greatest Player *France* ever had, being a Gentleman by Birth, was not judg'd unworthy of that Title upon the account of his Profession: And when enquiry was made about the false Nobles, he was admitted by the King and Council to make out the truth of his, which by right of Inheritance descended to his Posterity. Those of the *Opera*, if born Gentlemen, by the establishment of that Academy of Musick, are not to lose their Quality: Now are there Prerogatives for the one which are not to be allow'd the other? And if there be any distinction between them, have not all Ages determin'd it in favor of Comedy, since by the consent of all Nations, Poetry is the elder Sister of Musick?

Several Doctors (you say) or at least such as pretend to be so, have



have shown you certain Rituals, which forbid the Confessors to administer the Sacraments to Players, which they confirm by the Authority of several Councils. To this I answer, That those Rituals, and the Canons of those Councils, only mean it of such Players who act scandalous pieces, or who act them immodestly. But let those People tell you what difference they make between Stage-plays and other kinds of Sports; for as to the Rituals, the Canons, the Councils, &c. they make none, but equally prohibit them all. Yet your Doctors who talk so loudly of the Fathers and Councils, do not so scrupulously follow their Decisions against Gaming and other Sports. We find that the Abbots, Priests, Bishops and Ecclesiasticks make no difficulty of playing, and pretend that all the Censures of the Fathers ought to be understood of the excess in Sports, and not of those which are moderate, and us'd without much application to pass away a little time. Why then should not the same thing be urg'd, and the same Indulgence allow'd in behalf of Plays, since we find such a Dispensation with respect to other Sports? Besides, should you ask the Bishops and Prelates what they think of Plays, they would declare, that when they are modest, and have nothing in them which wounds Morality and Christianity, they do not pretend to censure them. And even if they were silent in the case, one may guess at their Opinion by their Conduct, since in those very Dioceses where those severe Rituals are us'd, Plays are acted, tolerated, and perhaps approv'd. If they are bad, why are they tolerated? As they are acted at *Paris*, I see no fault in them. 'Tis true, I cannot pass a definitive Judgment upon them, since I never go to see them: But there are three very easy ways of knowing what is done at the Theatres, and I acknowledg that I have made use of all three. The first is to inform one self of it by Men of Parts and Probity, who out of that horror they have to Sin, would not allow themselves to be present at those sort of Shows, if sinful. The next is, to judg by the Confessions of those who go thither of the evil Effects which Plays produce upon their Minds. The third is the reading of the Plays: and I protest that by these ways I have not been able to discover the least appearance of the excess which the Fathers with so much Justice condemn'd in Plays. A world of People of eminent Virtue, and of a very nice, not to say scrupulous Conscience, have been forced to own to me that the Plays on the French Theatre are at present so pure, that there is nothing in them which can offend the chastest Ear: Every day at Court the Bishops, Cardinals, and Nuncio's of the Pope make no scruple to be present at them; and it would be no less Impudence than Folly, to conclude that all those great Prelates are profane Libertines, since they authorize the Crime by their presence. 'Tis ra-

there.

ther a sign that the Plays are so pure and regular, that none need be asham'd or afraid to see them. I have likewise sometimes made a Reflection (which to me seems of some weight.) Upon casting my Eyes on the Bills pasted up at the corners of Streets, wherein all manner of Persons are invited to come to the Plays which are acted by the King's Authority, and by his Majesty's Servants: I thought to my self, if they invited People to some bad Action, to be in infamous places, &c. 'tis certain that the Magistrates would be so far from allowing the publication of those Bills, that they would severely punish the Authors of them, who abus'd the King's Authority, by inviting his good Subjects to the commission of such Enormities. Therefore concluded I, 'tis plain that Plays are not so bad, since the Magistrates do not put them down, nor the Prelates make any opposition to them, and since they act by the privilege of a religious Prince, who would not by his presence authorize a Crime, of which he would be more guilty than others.

As to Confessions, I could never by their means find out this pretended mischief of Plays: For if it were the source of so many Crimes, it would from thence follow that the Rich who frequent the Theatres, would be the greatest Sinners; and yet we find that 'tis pretty equal, and that the Poor who never saw a Play are as guilty as the Rich of Anger, Revenge, Uncleaness, and Pride. I would therefore rather conclude, and that with some reason too, that those Sins are the effects of human Weakness or Malice, which take an occasion of sinning from all manner of Objects indifferently.

As to the reading of the Plays which are now acted in *France*, I never could find in those I have perus'd, any thing which could any ways offend Christianity or good Manners. The greatest fault that can be found in them is, that most of the Subjects are taken out of Fables; and yet what harm is there in that? "They are such Fables out of which may be taken very fine Instructions of Morality, capable of inspiring Men with a love of Virtue, and a detestation of Vice. These are the words of a very great Man (*Peter Bishop of Blois*) who maintains, "That 'tis lawful to extract Truths out of Heathen Fables, and that 'tis no more than receiving Arms from our very Enemies.

To leave nothing unresolv'd, let me examin the Precautions which the Doctors give us in going to a Play. As to the lawfulness of the Drama, *St. Thomas*, *St. Bonaventure*, *St. Antonine*, and above all *Albertus Magnus* has said that in all Sports we ought to take care of three things. The first is, that we should not seek for Pleasure in immodest Words or Actions, as they did in the times of the Antients; an unhappy Custom which *Cicero* laments in these words:

There

There is a kind of jesting which is fordid, insolent, wicked, and obscene. The second thing we are to take care of, says *Albertus*, is, that when we would refresh our Spirits, we should not entirely lose the Gravity of the Soul, which gives *St. Ambrose* occasion to say: "Let us beware, lest in giving our Spirits some Relaxation, we lose the harmony of our Souls, where the Virtues form an agreeable Consort. And the third Condition required in our Sports, as well as in all the other Actions of our Lives, is, that they be suitable to the Person, Time and Place, and regulated by all the other Circumstances which may render them inoffensive. It would be easy for me to prove that none of these Qualifications are wanting to the Plays, as they are in *France*; from whence you ought to conclude that they are good and allowable.

After all I have said for Plays, you cannot question but they ought to be such as are free from all immodest Speeches and Actions. You have told me your self, that the Players are very careful of this point, and that they would not so much as suffer, when they accept of any piece, that it should have any thing in it indecent, licentious, equivocal, or the least word under which any poison might be conceal'd.

We have very severe Laws in *France* against Blasphemers; they are bor'd through the Tongue, they are condemn'd even to be burn'd: and should we care for the Players, or give them any privilege if they were Blasphemers, Libertines, or Profane?

We own, say our Reformers, that they dare not openly speak any thing that is profane, nor act upon the Stage those Infamies which were formerly acted there, but there is still something remaining of its primitive Corruption disguis'd under gay Names. Is there any Play acted now, where there is not some Love-intrigue or other? where the Passions are not represented in all their light? and where mention is not made of Ambition, Jealousy, Revenge and Hatred? A dangerous School for Youth, where they are easily dispos'd to raise real Passions in their Hearts by seeing feign'd ones represented! The first Duty of a Christian is to suppress his Passions, and not to expose himself to the growth of them; and by a necessary Consequence, nothing is more pernicious than that which is capable of exciting them.

A fine Speech this for a rigid Declaimer, but not sound enough for an equitable Divine! Is there no difference, think ye, between an Action or a Word which may by accident raise the Passions, and those which do it in reality?

The last are absolutely unlawful and sinful; and tho it might happen that a Man might be unmov'd by them, yet we are oblig'd to avoid them, because 'tis only by chance that they produce not their effect,



effect, whereas in their own nature they are always attended with pernicious Consequences. But for those Actions and Words which may by accident raise the Passions, we cannot justly condemn them; and we must even fly to Deserts to avoid them; for we cannot walk a Step, read a Book, enter a Church, or live in the World, without meeting with a thousand things capable of exciting the Passions. Must a Woman because she is handsome never go to Church, for fear of exciting the Lust of a Debauchee? Must the Great in Courts, and the Magistrates lay aside that Splendor which is becoming, and perhaps necessary to them, for fear of exciting Ambition, and a desire of Riches in others? Must a man never wear a Sword for fear of being guilty of Murder? This would be ridiculous: and tho by misfortune a Scandal happen, and an occasion of sinning be taken, 'tis a *Passive*, not an *Active* Scandal, (pardon those School-terms) 'tis an Occasion *taken*, not *given*, which kind alone we are order'd to avoid; for as to the first, 'tis impossible to avoid it, and sometimes, to foresee it.

All Histories (not excepting the Bible) make use of such words as express the Passions, and relate great Actions of which they have been the Cause. And will it be a Crime to read History, because we may there meet with something which may be an occasion of our falling? By no means, unless it be a scandalous, profane and loose History, such a one as does infallibly stir up dangerous Passions, and then 'tis no longer an occasion *taken*, but *given*. But this is not the Character of our Plays; for tho they speak of Love, Hatred, Ambition, Revenge, and the like, 'tis not done with an Intention of exciting those kinds of Passions in the Audience; nor are there any such scandalous Circumstances in them, as will infallibly produce such mischievous Effects in their Minds. Besides, as the wise *Lycurgus* said, Shall we destroy all the Vines, because some men get drunk with the juice of the Grape? An ill use has and may be made of the most Sacred things, such as are the Holy Scriptures, and consequently of the most indifferent and least serious: yet neither the one nor the other ought to be forbidden, unless we would forbid every thing that may be put to an ill Use.

As to the second Qualification which our Casuists require in Sports, which is to avoid breaking the Harmony of the Soul by the excess and length of our Pleasures; it may be said, that neither those who go to Plays, nor those who compose them, nor those who act them, so far unbend their Minds, as to destroy that just disposition of Soul. As for the first, they have their Liberty to go or stay away; and after a days Labour, two Hours of Refreshment may be allow'd. As for the Authors and Players, whose Profession seems to be one continued

ed Diversion, they do not certainly look upon their Lives to be a Play; since they have other serious Business in their Families, besides the common Duties of Christians to perform.

As for the circumstance of Time, of which our Casuists would have us take care, it is observed in *France*, where they never act but at proper Hours. One of the things against which the Fathers declaim'd the most was, the time of acting the Plays; they lasted the whole day, and People had scarce any time to go to Church. Thus *St. Chrysostom* complains; " That the Christians in his time, and " in his Diocess, did not only go to Plays, but were so intent upon them that they staid whole days at those infamous Sights, " without going one moment to Church. *St. John of Damascus* condemn'd the same Excess, in these words, " There are several " Towns where the Inhabitants are from morning to night Feasting their Eyes with all manner of Sights, and in hearing always " immodest Songs, which cannot chuse but raise in their Minds " wicked Desires. Is there any thing to be found like this in our Plays? They begin at five or six a Clock, when Divine Service is over, the Prayers and Sermon ended; when the Church Doors are shut, and People have had time enough to bestow on Business and Devotion; and they end about eight or nine.

As for the Circumstance of Places, 'tis observ'd in *France*; for, whereas formerly they acted in Churches, now they have publick Theatres for the purpose.

The Circumstance of the Persons is also observ'd, for those who Act are civil People, who have undertaken the Employ, and generally behave themselves in it with Decency; at least there are as few ill Men among them, as in other Professions: their Vice arises from their own corrupt Nature, and not from the State or Calling they are in, since all are not like them. I have convers'd, and am particularly acquainted with some of them, who out of the Theatre, and in their own Families, live the most exemplary Life in the World: and you have told me your self, that all of them in general, out of their common Stock, contribute a considerable Sum to pious and charitable Uses; of which the Magistrates and Superiors of the Convents could give sufficient Testimony. I question whether we can say as much of those zealous Persons who inveigh so loudly against them.

I am conscious, *Sir*, that some People will blame me for having follow'd the most favourable Opinion concerning Plays; for 'tis now the Fashion to teach an Austere Doctrine, and not to practise it: but I assure you I have wholly been govern'd by Truth, wishing still

to observe that Father's Rule who directs us to form our Actions by the most severe Opinions, and our Doctrine by the most indulgent. I am,

SIR, Yours, &c.

**B**Y this judicious Dissertation, you may find your whole desire satisfied: You see he has brought the Schoolmen to speak in favour of the Drama, and has explain'd the Invektives of the Fathers against it, so as to make them on its side. He has answer'd the most material Objections which can be brought against the Stage, and given very necessary Precautions to such as go to the Play-houses: You perceive 'tis a French Divine \*, [Father Caffaro, Brother to the Duke of —] one of the Romish Religion, who has given us his Thoughts in this Letter; and 'tis in behalf of the Plays acted in France that he has here argu'd. But were he to see our English Stage, he would never say such fine things of it; unless he saw it stocked only with Plays and Entertainments, innocently Diverting, and strictly Moral; as those which you have hitherto so successfully publish'd, are generally allow'd to be.

Give me leave before I conclude, to thank you for the sight of your Beauty in Distress, which I'll assure you pleas'd me so much in the reading, that I scarce imagin how it can yield greater satisfaction to those that see it Acted. Were it not for offending you, I might justly enlarge my self in its Commendation; but I forbear, since a perusal of it will give an Idea of it much above what can be said by,

SIR,

Your real Friend to

serve you

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\* See Journal des Scavans, Paris. Histoire des Ouvrage des Scavans, Rotterdam [ : & Oeuvres de Bourfault.

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To my Friend, the *AUTHOR*.

**T**IS hard, my Friend, to write in such an Age,  
 As damns not only Poets, but the Stage.  
 That sacred Art, by Heav'n it self infus'd,  
 Which *Moses, David, Salomon* have us'd,  
 Is now to be no more: The Muses Foes  
 Wou'd sink their Maker's Praises into Prose,  
 Were they content to prune the lavish Vine  
 Of straggling Branches, and improve the Wine;  
 Who but a mad Man wou'd his Faults defend?  
 All wou'd submit; for all but Fools will mend;  
 But, when to common sense they give the Lie,  
 And turn distorted Words to Blasphemy,  
 They give the Scandal; and the Wise discern  
 Their Glosses teach an Age too apt to learn.  
 What I have loosely, or profanely writ,  
 Let them to Fires (their due desert) commit;  
 Nor, when accus'd by me, let *them* complain:  
 Their Faults and not their Function I arraign;  
 Rebellion, worse than Witchcraft, they pursu'd:  
 The Pulpit preach'd the Crime; the People ru'd.  
 The Stage was silenc'd: for the Saints wou'd see  
 In fields perform'd their plotted Tragedy.  
 But let us first reform: and then so live,  
 That we may teach our Teachers to forgive.  
 Our Desk be plac'd below their lofty Chairs,  
 Ours be the Practice, as the Precept theirs.  
 The moral part at least we may divide,  
 Humility reward, and punish Pride:  
 Ambition, Int'rest, Avarice accuse:  
 These are the Province of the Tragic Muse.

These hast thou chosen; and the public Voice  
 Has equal'd thy performance, with thy choice:  
 Time, Action, Place, are so preserv'd by thee  
 That ev'n *Cornwall*, might with envy see  
 Th' Alliance of his tripled Unity.  
 Thy Incidents, perhaps, too thick are sown;  
 But too much Plenty is thy fault alone:  
 At least but two, can that good Crime commit;  
 Thou in Design, and *Wycherley* in Wit.  
 Let thy own *Gauls* condemn thee if they dare;  
 Contented to be thinly regular.  
 Born there, but not for them, our fruitful Soil  
 With more Increase rewards thy happy Toil.  
 Their Tongue infeeble, is refin'd so much,  
 That, like pure Gold, it bends at ev'ry touch:  
 Our sturdy *Teuton*, yet will Art obey,  
 More fit for manly thought, and strengthen'd with Allay.  
 But whence art thou inspir'd, and Thou alone  
 To flourish in an Idiom, not thine own?  
 It moves our wonder, that a foreign Guest  
 Shou'd over-match the most, and match the best.  
 In underpraising, thy Deserts I wrong:  
 Here, find the first deficiency of our Tongue:  
 Words, once my stock, are wanting to commend  
 So Great a Poet, and so Good a Friend.

JOHN DRYDEN.

PRO.



# PROLOGUE.

Enter a Player.

Play. *Gentlemen, I am sent to acquaint you, that, by reason of an Accident, there can be no Prologue spoke to day; but the Play will begin immediately.*

Enter Mr. Bowen.

Mr. Bowen. **H**ow's that? No Prologue? go, this must not be;  
I'll rather speak one now extempore. [Exit Player.]

Stay: How shall I begin? — I have it now —  
Gallants! — Hold! I forgot to make my Bow. [Bows.]

Gallants, Our Author — Ay, that's well begun,  
Our Author — To — For — hold, I can't go on:

This Modesty does strangely balk a Man.  
Why should I strive to help these Tragic Actors?

Hang 'em, they make you dull, like any Doctors.

Well, if for nothing but grave Stuff you're all,

I too will rant, and toss my awful Head,

Till from the Battlements of yon' high Wall

The Mob look pale to see me look so red.

But what shall I say next? — O! Stay, I've got

The Epilogue; I'll speak it now. Why not?

More Poet-Bays than one, when all things fail,

Turn thus the Tail to Head, and Head to Tail.

I hate to sneak in, and be hift away,

Begging for Mercy, when you've damn'd the Play!

Prompter, take th' Epilogue, and prompt me right;

We're always damn'd imperfect the first night. [The Prompter takes a

Prompter. You've seen the Play. Paper from him, and  
Mr. Bo. How's that? retires to prompt.

Prom. You've seen the Play;

Mr. Bo. You've seen the Play! Why, that won't do? But stay.

We'll let that pass; if you han't seen't, you may.

What's next?

Prom. You think —

Mr. Bo. You think your time mispent;

But know, 'twas studied to be play'd in Lent;

(over)

A time when some of you so nice were grown,  
Y' abstain'd from ev'ry kind of Flesh, but one.  
You Topers, leaving Wine, to grow devout,  
Got only drunk in Darby, Punch and Stout,  
Nay ev'n we Players, not over-godly neither,  
Fasted the week, that none of you came hither.  
But that's no Fast to what poor Poets fear.  
If his Play's damn'd, he keeps Lent all the year.  
Now you, instead of fasting, went to spark it,  
To race, cock, bet, and lose by *Stiff-Dick at New Market*;  
While drooping here we did your Loss condole,  
Tugging with *Viva viva Barbacole*.  
So we laid this Play by, when you were gone,  
For you Sparks now to mortify upon;  
You know a Reformation's coming on.  
Then bear these moral Scenes with Resignation,  
T'insure you to be ween'd from darling Fornication.

## The EPILOGUE,

Spoken by Mrs. Bracegirdle.

Poys'ning and stabbing you have seen me scape,  
And, what you think no mighty thing, a Rape;  
But can poor Poet scape, like richer Drudges,  
The dreadful Votes of his five hundred Judges?  
He has no Epilogue. What shall he do?  
H'as sent me a Petition here for you.  
That's it — Cry Mercy! That's a Billetdoux.

[She pulls out a Paper, and puts it up in haste; then pulls out a Petition, and reads it.]

Reads. To you great Wits, dread Critics, nicest Beaux!  
Gay Sparks with borrow'd Wit, and Masks, with borrow'd  
You, who to chat or ogle fill yond' Benches, [Clothes!  
Or tempt with Love our modest Orange Wenches!

Rakes,



Rakes, Cuckolds, Cits, Squires, Cullies great and small!

*I think, Sirs, this Petition's to you all.*

*[Speaks this line of her self.]*

*Reads.*

The trembling Author, by this short Petition,  
Most humbly shows, he's in a sad condition :  
Doom'd to be thought profane, or write dull Trash,  
Venture Damnation, or some Zealot's Lash :  
Has chose to trust your Clemency to live,  
For well he knows, that sometimes you forgive.  
Then spare these Scenes, and let all People see  
Plays may be lik'd, yet grave and moral be.  
Seem pleas'd and edifi'd to go away,  
And your Petitioner shall never pray — }  
Without remembering you and his third day. }

*[Here ends the Petition.]*

Now, Sirs, I'd know what you would have him ask ? }  
As for you Rakes, that's no uneasy Task, }  
Good Wine for you, full Pockets, and a Mask. }  
And for you, Masks, still in your Pray'rs — but stay, }  
Who ever knew a Vizard Mask to pray ? }  
For Cits, he should ask Trade ; for Courtiers, Places ; }  
For Squires, more Wit ; and for you, Beaux, more Graces, }  
Kind trusting Taylors, full Wigs, and new Faces ; }  
And for you, Footkeys, better luck at Races : }  
For Sharpers wealthy Bubbles, and much Play ; }  
For Souldiers, no more fighting, and full Pay. }  
But 'twere in vain to mention ev'ry Head, }  
I guess a Poet's Prayers are quickly said ; }  
He seldom prays but to avoid his Curse, }  
An empty Play-house, and an empty Purse. }

Yet, Ladies, for your Smiles Ours chiefly prays :  
You make a Muse, and ev'ry Spirit raise.  
Grace this first Offspring of his Fragic Vein  
With one kind Smile, that's his most valu'd Gain.

# Dramatis Personæ.

## M E N.

- Mr. Betterton. Don *VINCENTIO* disguis'd like a  
Black, by the Name of *MORAT*.  
In love with *Placentia*.  
Mr. Verbruggen. *RICARDO*, in love with *Placentia*,  
contracted to *Laura*.  
Mr. Kynaston. D. *FERDINAND* Governor of *Lisbon*.  
Mr. Hodgson. D. *FABIANO* his Son in love with  
*Placentia*.  
Mr. Arnold. *ZEMET*, a Black, *Vincentio's* Servant.  
Captain of a Brigantine.  
His Lieutenant.  
Two Monks. Bravoes. Sailors.  
Guards. Servants.

## W O M E N.

- Mrs. Barry. *LAURA* a Widow Lady, privately  
contracted to *Ricardo*.  
Mrs. Bracegirdle. *PLACENTIA*.  
Mrs. Moore. *MORELLA*.  
Mrs. Prince. *MELINDA*.  
*Laura's* two Children, Women, &c.

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## S C E N E

An Antichamber in D. *Vincentio's* House in *Lisbon*.  
The Time of Action from 5 to 8 in the Evening.

*Beauty in Distress :*  
A  
**TRAGEDY.**

ACT I.

*The Scene throughout the Play is an Anti Chamber.*

*Enter Vincentio in a Moorish-Dress, his Skin black'd over,  
assuming the Name of Morat. Zemet his Servant.*

*Mor.* **A**H! poor *Vincentio*, alter'd more by Passions (thee)  
Than by this new Disguise, who now cou'd know  
Thou'rt grown a Stranger to thy very self.  
'Tis scarce a Year since I fled hence to *Africa*;

But oh! how Sorrow, Sickness, and Fatigue,  
And most my anxious Love, since that, have chang'd me.  
I doubt I wear this borrow'd Black and Dress

Rather to try *Placentia*, thus unknown,  
Than to reclaim and save my wicked Brother.

*Zemet.* You're but too kind to him, my Lord. I hear,  
That when a fatal Duel forc'd you hence,  
He stab'd the Friend who strove to get your Pardon,  
To hinder your Return.

*Mor.* With what unnat'ral Joy, he, in the Morning,  
Heard us confirm the Tidings of my Death!

*Zem.* My Lord, if he's as wicked as he's thought,  
'Twou'd have been ill in him to have done better.

E

Ba

Bad Men still act themselves in ev'ry thing that's bad,  
And are not to be blam'd for barb'rous Actions,  
More than the Beasts of Prey for Cruelty :  
Nor is it for their Vices, but their Natures,  
We shou'd destroy 'em both.

*Mor.* Yes, he's my Shame ;

But still my Brother ; therefore yet a while  
Let *Lisbon* think me dead, as I'm reported.  
In this Disguise I thought fit to confirm it ;  
For, shou'd they think I live, the King wou'd never  
Grant him his Pardon for *Don Carlo's* Murther.

*Zem.* It seems he's sure of it, for he has left  
The Sanctuary, and lords it in your House.

*Mo.* Upon the confirmation of my Death,  
The King has sign'd the Warrant for his Pardon ;  
So to prevent th' Extinction of our Name,  
Which Royal Gratitude still makes him value.  
Then let him revel, till the Seals are past,  
As a sole Brother in my large Estate ;  
That done, I will revive, a severe check  
On all his future Life.

*Zem.* I wish yours be secure, my Lord !  
Tools of Destruction still stand ready prest  
To a bad hand, and Murther watches sure.  
Then, give me leave to fear.

*Mo.* I'll keep Prevention's Eye upon the Watch ;  
But I disdain to fear. For Death must come,  
And 'tis no matter when : Once in the Grave,  
Long Life and short are both become the same.  
Death levels all : Age, Beauty, Wealth, and Titles,  
Lye undistinguish'd, huddled up together,  
And none complain of what, or when, or how.  
Oh ! I cou'd wish my Dust with thy dead Parents  
Lay blended in one Urn on *Africk's* Shore,  
Rather than languish thus in hopeless Love,  
And see my Father's Glory  
Turn rusty in this Brother.

*Zem.* Ah ! my Lord,  
That rusts not, since it shines so bright in you.

*Mor.* Zemet, no more. I here expect *Placenia* ;  
This is her way from Chappel ———

See, she comes. — Withdraw.

[ *Exit Zemet.*

She comes, and weeps for me,  
For the false News I brought her. Cruel Fate,  
Deal me less Pity, and some Love ———

*Enter*

*Enter Placentia Weeping.*

*Mor. to himself.]* I shiver ———  
 How my Heart beats! Ev'n thro' this hue, I fear,  
 She'll read my Soul's Disorder ——— Now I burn.  
 Let Love be drawn no more with golden Darts,  
 But arm'd with Fires: I feel him in my Veins.  
 How shall I speak?

*Plac.* Oh! gen'rous *Don Vincentio*,  
 As soon shall I forget my self as thee.

*Mo. aside.]* Now, by my Love, there's Life in that kind Sorrow;  
 It bids me hope, and speak.

*To her.]* Why, Madam, will you lavish thus your Tears  
 On my dead Friend? He ne'er cou'd gain your Love;  
 Yet, if departed Souls see things on Earth,  
*Placentia* is *Vincentio's* present Object,  
 And not one Tear she sheds but he must prize  
 At a much greater Value than his Life.

*Plac.* Can I do less than weep for that brave Lord?  
 Oh! Sir, you were a Stranger to his worth.

*Mor.* No, Madam; none cou'd know *Vincentio* better  
 Than did *Morat*; and you will think so too,  
 When I relate some Passages he told me.  
 He said, you were the Cause of all those Sighs  
 He had betray'd so often, and I pitied;  
 He said, such Beauty and such Cruelty  
 Ne'er met in one before; and yet methinks  
 Your Tears and Sorrow contradict his Words ———  
*Aside.]* If I talk long, I shall betray my self.

*Plac.* Since my best Lord (for so I always call'd him)  
 Made you no Stranger to those humble Thoughts,  
 The only Blemish of his noble Life,  
 I will a little clear that passage to you ———  
 His Vertuous Mother, for what Cause I know not,  
 Took me from humble Birth, to breed me as her Child.

*Mor.* Madam, he told me this, and that his Mother  
 Had made your Fortune equal to her Daughters;  
 Commanding him to see you nobly married, or a Nun.  
 But Love, he said, doubled that Pious Charge,  
 And he ne'er wish'd for any Wife but you.  
 Oh! why did you refuse to make him happy?

*Plac.* To clear my self to you, I'll tell you that  
 Which shou'd not be reveal'd, were he still living.



*Mor. aside.]* Now I begin to tremble.

*Plac.* His Mother found out that unhappy Love ;  
And, lest it shou'd dishonour his great Name,  
Taught me t'obey him, as my Lord and Brother ;  
But charg'd me, as I tender'd Heav'n, my Soul,  
Her Memory, or any Thing that's Sacred,  
I ne're shou'd marry him.

*Mor. aside.]* Oh ! Patience Heav'n !

*Plac.* This was her daily, and her last Request ;  
And, that I might Religiously perform it,  
Resolving with my self a single Life,  
I solemnly did swear, Never to wed above my humble Birth.

*Mor. aside.]* 'Twill be in vain to live after this Story.  
Oh ! Mother----you mix'd the worst of Curses with that Breath  
That gave your wretched Son his latest Blessing.

*Plac.* You're strangely mov'd ! — But see *Ricardo* !  
I wou'd shun him.

*Enter Ricardo. Servants after him.*

*Ric.* You were my Brother's Servants ; I dismiss you —  
*Placencia, stay.*

*Serv.* My Lord, our Wages.

*Ric.* Do Men like me pay Wages ?

*Serv.* My Lord ———

*Ric.* Talk with my Steward ! hence ! Be gone ! [*Ex. Servants.*  
Well, Madam ?

*Plac.* My Lord.

*Ric.* So scornful still ! I will no longer bear it.

*Plac. asb.]* How I dread his vile Love, since now he's Master here !

*Ric.* How now, *Morat* ? What, you've been talking now  
Of my dead Brother, and the Creature weeps.  
'Tis true, the humble Fop indulg'd her Pride  
With honourable Love, tho' still she scorn'd him.

*Mo. asb.]* Hold ! Patience yet ! Thus most Heirs treat the Dead.

*To Ric.]* My Lord, I was your Brother's worthless Friend,  
And know how much he did esteem this Lady,  
As I believe, not without due desert.

*Ric.* Oh, dull *Morat* ! thou dost not know this Trifle ;  
Thou art a Moor, and look'st on outward Toys,  
Fine Cloaths and Jewels ; why, these Things are mine ;  
I'll strip her of 'em all, if she consents not  
To yield to my Embraces.

*Mor.* My Lord, I fancy 'tis not in your Power.

*Ric.*

*Ric.* Hark you, *Morat*; I suffer'd you my House  
For the good News this Morning you confirm'd.  
But ne're believe I made you of my Council.

*Mor.* No; if you had, I shou'd advise you better  
Than thus to forfeit all your House's Honour  
By most ignoble Actions.

*Ric.* How's this, Slave?

*Mo.* By all my former Honour, that Name Slave,  
Did not you share your noble Brother's Blood,  
Shou'd cost the dearest Drop about your Heart.

*Ric.* Sure, he's run mad—Out of my House, thou Frenzy.

*Mor.* I will not stir.

Your Brother made me Joynt-Executor  
With this fair Lady; I'll soon prove his Will,  
And till I've seen it all perform'd, I'll stay.

*Ric.* You mean, till th' Inquisition seizes you.  
Do you not, Moor? you two Executors!

*Mor.* Laugh not too fast, my Lord: Your Inquisition  
Can't fright me; for tho' my Complexion's black,  
My Soul is white and Christian, which, I fear,  
The Holy Font has not made yours.

*Ric.* Insolent Slave! who waits! what hoa! not one  
Of my new Train to rid me of this Moor?  
Nay, then I'll do't my self.

[*Draws, Mor. closes with him, and disarms him.*]

*Mor.* Inhospitable Wretch!

*Plac.* Hold! help! help!

*Mor.* Here, take your Sword, and put it up, proud Lord,  
But oh! insult no further, if you'd live.

[*Gives him back his Sword.*]

*Enter Servants and Zemet.*

*Ric. aside.]* Disarm'd! and by a Moor! But he's not worth  
A second Danger. I've some trusty Bravo's,  
Who safely shall correct his Insolence.

*To his Servants.]* Hence, Slaves! there's now no need of you.

*Exeunt Servants and Zemet.*

*Mor.* My Lord, yet think from what great Stock you sprung,  
And how a Nobleman shou'd keep that Name:  
'Tis not to be preserv'd by dead Mens Actions;  
You must have living Vertues, or 'tis lost——  
Come, I perceive that you attend with shame  
My too severe Reproof, and I repent it;

I'll leave you to repent too for the Cause.

Madam, some other Time I'll wait on you. [Exit Morat.

*Pla. aside,* } A brave good Man, well worth *Vincentio's* Friend-  
and going. }

(ship!

*Ri.* Stay, scornful Thing.

*Pla.* I must not.

*Ri.* Must not?

*Pla.* No — you've forfeited at last all the Respect I ow'd you.

*Ri.* Yes, you shall stay: I'll know what you've been hatching,  
That I'm thus brav'd with a forg'd Will. 'Tis vain:

Your Reign is out; The Fool my Brother's dead,

And I'll command what hitherto I begg'd.

You're now my Ward, my Prisoner if I please:

You're not in those cold Climes, where Maids and Wives

Rove where they please, as shameless as unquestion'd,

To wrong the dull contented Herd of Men.

If you'll be paid my Mother's Legacy,

That lavish Gift, a Portion for a Princess,

Your proud pretended Vertue laid aside,

Meet my Embraces willingly to morrow,

Or soon by Force you shall. Till then think of it.

*Pla.* I'll think on Daggers for the Ravisher,  
To cool his Fires, or save my self from shame.

Yes, ev'n the fam'd *Lucretia* I'll out-vye;

Not let the *Tarquin* force the brutal Joy,

But kill him first, or with my Honour dye. } *Exit Placen.*

*Ri.* Thou fir'st me so, that for Revenge  
I cou'd — I cou'd even marry thee, young Fury.

But at a cheaper Rate I'll ease my Rage:

She and my Sisters harden one another

In rigid Coyness, and in hate of me,

But they shall Wed, and leave this House to morrow;

Then by Wiles, Threats, or Force, I'll deal with t'other.

Who waits?

*Enter Servant.*

*Serv.* My Lord!

*Ric.* Call both my Sisters.

*Serv.* Yes, my Lord.

[Exit Servant.

*Ric.* I must prepare 'em to receive new Lovers;  
Tho' now few Women need such Preparations.

*Enter*

*Enter Morella and Melinda.*

*Ric.* Still weeping!

D'you grieve at my good Fortune? Come, I've got  
Young Husbands for you: That, I take to be  
The surest way to dry a Virgin's Tears.

To morrow *Don Fabiano* shall be yours,

*Morella*; and *Don Paulo* yours, *Melinda*.

*Mel. aside.*] His lewd Friend *Paulo*!

*Morel.* *Fabiano*! poor *Placentia*'s Lover!

*Ric.* What, Dumb? Are they not Noble, Rich, and Young?

*Morel.* Oh! Let us hear of nothing, Sir, but Grief.

Alas! we cannot even think of those

My Brother's Choice design'd us once for Husbands.

*Ric.* You need not: For, their hopes, like him, must dye.

No more—Compose your Looks to meet my Friends.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* *Don Ferdinand*, My Lord, is just a lighting

*Ric. aside.* The Governor! He brings his Son *Fabiano*!

I'll meet him—Sisters stay till I return. [*Exit Ric. and Serv.*]

*Morel.* Oh! dismal News! now we indeed are wretched.

Completely wretched. Alas poor *Vincentio*!

How soon we feel thy Loss, thou best of Brothers!

*Enter Placentia.*

*Plac.* Dear Orphan Ladies, let us mingle Sorrows.

Alas, I'm an unhappy Orphan too.

Like you, methinks, I mourn a Brother's Loss,

And what's yet more, a Friend's.

*Morel.* A Friend's indeed! alas, my Dear, I doubt  
Your Tears, like ours, will flow from several Springs.

I'm bid to wed to morrow your *Fabiano*.

*Plac.* Hah! But why am I startled and disorder'd?

Tho', to my Soul's eternal dear Disquiet,

We love each other, ev'n to meer Distraction,

My hopes are lost, for I must keep my Vow.

I wish a mutual Love might link your Fates.

*Morel.* Oh! wish not this, my Dear, my Heart is fix'd:

*Don Philip*, or a Cloyster.

*Enter*

*Enter Don Ferdinand, D. Fabiano, Ricardo.*

*Plac. Fabiano;* with his Father! Oh my Heart!

I must not stay; yet I am rooted here.

*Ric.* Sister *Morella*, let my Lord be us'd

As his great Merit, and my Choice deserve.

*Ferd.* Son, scorn Ignoble Love! See there your better Fate.

*Ri. aside.* } Let's not seem to observe 'em, while he whispers  
to *Ferd.* }

His first Love-Complement. All Infancies are bashful,  
And that of Love is most.

*Pla. aside.* ] Amazement! sure he loves her! how they whisper!

What do I feel? 'tis more than Love; 'tis Jealousie, I fear.

Am I then Jealous? What, of him I'd lose?

I will not: Sure he came in hopes to see me.

Away, curst Jealousie! Thou needless Physick,

That turn't our Health to voluntary Sickneſs,

I dash thee from me like a Poyſon—yet I will look.

*Mel. aside to Plac.* ] My Dear, you're Jealous?

*Pla.* } Not at all—yet I must gaze—I'm rack'd—I cannot bear it.  
*aside.* }

*Exit Placentia.*

*Mel, aside.* ] I must follow her.

[ *Exit Mel.*

*Ferd.* What's that bright Vision which now shot from hence,  
Swift as a Star?

*Ric.* A falling one, a glaring fatal Meteor,  
The worthless Creature of my Mother's Favour,  
Her Fortune ample, but her Birth unknown.

*Ferd.* 'Tis a fair Destruction!

I blush to own I've heard my Son was dazled  
By her deluding Beams. This made me hasten  
To fix him quickly in a nobler choice:  
Which was my Motive to demand your Sister  
When I engag'd to get your Pardon sign'd.

*Fa. aside to Morel.* ] Madam, you know the tie upon my Heart,  
The longings of my Soul, *Placentia's* Love:

My Trust in your kind Pity brought me hither,  
Which all my Father's Threats cou'd scarce have done.

Then let's retire, since by your gen'rous Suff'rance  
I may see her once more: For, if I stay,

I shall act Love so ill, it will betray us. [ *Ex. Fa. and Morel.*

*Ric.* She's his, My Lord: The Conqueror leads his Prize.

*Ferd. aside.* ] Now, as I love bright Honour, this sight charms me,  
And makes my Age, in spite of Time, run back.

'Tis



'Tis true, this Lord has dimm'd his House's Glory;  
But now I hope 'twill clear. High Birth, tho' clouded  
With fashionable Vices, will at last  
Exert it self and shine.

*Enter a Servant to Ricardo.*

*Ser.* My Lord, a Lady in a Veil desires to speak with your Lord.

*Fer.* My Lord, I'll leave you, and in an Hour return. (*Ship.*)

*Ri.* Your Lordship's Servant—— [*Ex. Ferd. and Servant.*]

*To his Serv.*] Conduct the Lady in ——

I fear 'tis *Laura*—— But why shou'd I fear?

She's kind, she's fair—— But oh! I'm bound to wed her:

I on that score, was trusted with her Fortune,

And lost it all at Play. She's heard the News,

And comes prepar'd to share my Joys—— I dread her:

Let me wed nothing but variety.

But I'll dissemble yet; for tho' when pleas'd

She's smiling as the Morn, cool as the Evening,

And calm as is the Night, when urg'd, she rages

Like the *Meridian* Sun's collected Beams;

Proud of her Charms, tho' lavish of her Love;

Gen'rous, and free, and daring, like a Man;

But Jealous and Revengeful, like a Woman——

'Tis she ——

Now help me, Cunning, once to feign

A Joy as great as hers—— My *Laura*!

*Enter Laura.*

*Lau.* Fly off my Veil! Oh! let me rush at once  
Into his Heart, into his very Soul.

*Ri.* My Life, my all!

*Lau.* Oh let me gaze—I cannot speak for Joy—Oh happy Change!  
When the Profuseness of my Love had left me  
Nothing to give to save thy Life, but mine,  
To see thee rais'd at once to Honour, Wealth, and Freedom,  
From Shame, from Death, and Ruine,  
'Tis Rapture, 'tis Delight transcending Words,  
Too vast for Thought, and ev'n too strong for Souls,  
'Tis perfect Joy, and Pleasure in extrem.

*Ri.* Oh! do not talk of Honour, Wealth, and Freedom:  
Your self, your self's the greatest, dearest Blessing.

*Lau.* In being so to thee, thy *Laura's* blest,  
Life of my Life, and Genius of my Soul;  
Thy very Shadow brings me more delight  
Than all the Substance of the World besides;

For I've no Being, when I'm torn from thee ;  
Or, if I find I've one, 'tis only by my Pains.

*Ri.* Oh ! sympathy of Hearts ! My only Joy !  
'Twas not less Pain to me to be forc'd from thee,  
Than now 'tis Pleasure thus to meet thee kind.

*Lau.* Oh ! now I hope we're met to part no more.  
Let me no longer hear nor think of Absence.  
Absence to some gives Relish to their Joy,  
A breathing to their Pleasures ; but to me  
'Twas Death, when to the Monast'ry you fled,  
And to be safe lay hid.

*Ri.* Ah ! Madam ———

*Lau.* Madam ! Eye, leave this dull Formaliry.  
Does it suit Love of such a Growth as ours ?  
I shou'd abhor it, came it not from thee.

*Ri.* Oh ! stop this Torrent of unbounded Love.  
Joy came before but like a quick'ning Shower  
On a parch'd Soil, and greedily I drunk it ;  
But now I'm overwhelm'd, and drown'd in Joy ———  
Thus now all Lovers lye to one another. [Aside.]

*Lau.* Dear Man, thou'rt doubly pleas'd  
Now thou can'st raise me  
As I wou'd thee, were but thy Fortune mine ;  
For thou'rt no needy younger Brother now,  
Thy *Laura* shall no longer have the Pleasure  
Of lavishing her Wealth on Love, and thee.  
Indeed she cou'd not.

*Ri.* Extravagance of Goodness !

*Lau.* Alas ! I fear'd that *Lisbon* wou'd have seen me  
With those two little Orphans, my poor Children,  
A forc'd Dependant on the cold loath'd Alms  
Of proud upbraiding Friends : For all I've left  
Is threaten'd to be seiz'd. The Thought on't damps my Joy ;  
But let it dye with all our former Sorrows. (Wealth)  
I'm rich enough, since I've thy Love, that can command thy  
Soon as the Priest has ratified our Contract,  
Which now now your Brother's dead, and my first Year  
Of Widowhood expir'd, need be no Secret.  
We'll live like Gods. Say, shall we not ? Methinks  
Thou art not glad enough.

*Ri.* Excess of Joy, like that of Grief, is dumb ;  
“ And, like vast Streams, too deep for Noise, flows silent,  
“ While shallow Torrents roar, then cease to be.  
I fear she'll find me out.

[Aside.]  
*Lau.*

*Lau.* "But tell me, when shall be the happy Day?"

*Ri.* "Soon as some short Formalities of Law

"Have giv'n me full Possession of th' Estate,

"The best Artificers shall strain, to hasten

"The wish'd-for Time, and make our Nuptials sumptuous.

*Lau.* "Then, like a Palace, we'll this House adorn.

"The Walls shall scorn with *Arras* to be cloath'd,

"Unless the Gold shames there the shading Silk.

"Amazing Wonders that dissemble Life

"In each Apartment, shall beguile the Gazers.

"The Spoils of *India*, and more distant Climes

"Shall croud, and rear their Fronts on rival Rarities,

"In antique Order, various as their Make;

"And ev'n the fragrant Wood, which in Compartments

"Floors the vast Rooms, seem proud to bear the Load.

*Ri.* "Oh! Elegance in Luxury! Oh! Sex refin'd in Fancy--

*Aside.*] "To undo the other.

*Lau.* Oh! now methinks we solemnize our Nuptials,

A num'rous Train with all melodious Sounds

Salute us and the Morn. Then we, far brighter,

Ascend our Coach, or Love's Triumphal Chariot.

Garlands and Arches grace and roof our way,

And flow'ry Sweets, profusely strow'd, perfume it.

Joy in each Face, and Blessings in each Mouth.

*Ri.* Oh! Theme for ever charming--To a Widow. [*Aside.*

*Lau.* Then, my *Ricardo*, then ———

*Ri.* Oh! then my *Laura* ———

*Lau.* The crowded Board shall tempt our num'rous Guests

With all that can indulge Luxuriant Taste.

"Conduits shall lavish Wine, and richer Liquors,

And all the Muses labour to Inchant us.

*Ri.* And then at Night my Goddesses ———

*Lau.* Ten thousand Tapers shall revive the Day,

While at a solemn Ball, the Pride of *Lisbon*

Shall shine and revel ———

*Ri.* And tir'd at last with all these smaller Joys,

I leave us to perfect Pleasure. Thus, my Goddesses,

Thus will *Ricardo* ravish all thy Senses;

Unpeople th' Elements to Feast thy Taste,

To charm thy Ears, rob ev'n the Spheres of Musick,

Tire Art and Nature to regale thy Sight,

Inform thy Brain with ev'ry grateful Odor,

Thy Touch with Bliss, and ravish ev'ry Pow'r,

Till in one sense we lose the other four.

[*Embraces her.*

*Enter*

*Enter two Monks.**1. Monk.* My Lord.*Ri.* What mean these Monks?*1. Monk.* My Lord, We've weighty Business,  
That claims your private Ear with utmost speed.*Lau.* Some dead Man's Alms—*1. Monk.* Hear us this Moment, if you love your self.*Ri.* Then follow me — pray pardon me, dear Madam.  
I'll strive to meet you here again this Moment——  
Or at your own House rather.*To himself.]* 'Twas well dissembl'd: But I'm glad I'm eas'd.  
How loath'd a thing must a fond Woman be!  
Ev'n Monks are welcome, when from her they free.*[Ex. Ric. and Monks.]**Lau.* Curs'd be the Holy Duns! Those bold Intruders  
Into the Privacies of blinded Mortals,  
Self-privileg'd to break-in on the Great!  
Those craving Idlers, who preach Charity,  
Yet never had one Spark for one another!  
Presumptuous Beggars, who with Saint-like Mein,  
With proud Humility, and sawcy Meekness  
Can seem at best but impudently good.  
The Doatards know (for well they know our Sex)  
That what a Woman never will forgive  
Is an Intruder, whose preventing Words  
Force from her Arms her Lover to remove;  
In the wild Sallies of unfinish'd Love.*Exit.**The End of the First Act.***ACT.**

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 A C T II
 

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*Enter Morella and Melinda.*

*Mel.* **W**HY do we leave *Fabiano* with *Placentia*?

I dare trust all his Vertues, but his Prudence.  
 - He loves—he'll stay too long, and be discover'd.

*Morel.* Fear not, my Brother's busie with two Fathers,  
 And tho' *Placentia* loves, she shuns her Lover;  
 Like him she languishes, unhappy Maid;  
 But her Discretion, and yet more her Vow,  
 Force that despairing Lord for ever from her—  
 And see, she comes; he follows;—both in Tears!  
 In pity let's avoid 'em.

*Enter Placentia, follow'd by Fabiano.*

[*Exeunt Morel. and Mel.*]

*Fab.* Stay, cruel Maid! Oh turn, and cast one look!  
 One look, tho' 'twere a Frown, and but to see me dye.

*Pla.* Alas, I dare not; must not meet your Eyes:  
 They must not see how mine partake their Sorrows.  
 Fly, fly, my Lord, where equal Greatness calls  
 Leave poor *Placentia* to her humble Fate.

*Fab.* Not hear me!

*Pla.* I dread those Words that make ev'n ruine please,  
 The tempting Musick of your Syren Love.

*Fab.* Can it bring ruine to be match'd to Greatness?

*Pla.* When by the Match that Greatness is debas'd.

*Fab.* Why will you still urge this, too humble fair?

Oh! wrong not thus your Merit, and my Love.

*Pla.* Witness, ye sacred Pow'rs that read my Soul!  
 Witness, my Blushes, and these grateful Tears,  
 How much I prize you, gen'rous, dear *Fabiano*!  
 For ev'ry Sigh you breath, I-Sigh another.  
 Oh! had our Births been equal as our Passions,  
 We might have lov'd on still.

I see the Heav'n of Joy, your Love, wou'd give me;  
 But, like a Wretch condemn'd to endless Torments,

The



The vast abyss between, adds to my Pain :  
 I wish, I sigh, I grieve, I rage in vain ;  
 I wou'd ascend, but cannot break my Chain.

*Fab.* Love equals all, and you're most sure of mine.

*Pla.* I still shou'd fear to lose what I deserve not,  
 Still dread my Equal's Envy, and the Scorn of yours :  
 And thus shou'd live more wretched yet than now,  
 This fatal *now*, that sees me tear my Heart,  
 While thus I tear my self for ever from you.

*Fa.* You tear my Heart, but shall not tear me from you. [going.  
[kneels  
 Thus you shall drag me, while I suffer Life ;  
 And when I've eas'd my wretched Soul with this, [Draws a Dagger.  
 'Twill hover o're you still, to wait for yours.  
 For sure in Death we're equal, and may joyn.

*Pla.* Oh ! hold ! and rise ! fright me not with your Danger,  
 Nor humble me yet more with your Submissions.

*Fab.* Raise then at once a Wretch to Love and You.  
 To rise thus, I'll descend, and mix with humble Swains,  
 In lowly Cottages, and rustick Weeds,  
 And there forget that fatal thing call'd Greatness.

*Pla.* Oh ! rise, degrade it not by kneeling thus.

*Fab.* No, let your Answer make me rise or fall.

*Pla.* Alas ! my Lord, I know this wou'd but prove  
 A Dream, that might a while indulge your Fancy,  
 While Mem'ry wou'd lye lock'd in the first sleep  
 That Love might lull it too ; but too too soon  
 You'd wake to hatred of your self and me.

*Enter D. Ferdinand.* *Fab. starts and rises.*

*Ferd.* My Son !

Base Man ! I thought t'have found you with *Morella* !  
 But hear me swear ; By my great Ancestors !  
 That Hour *Fabiano* weeds below his Rank  
 Makes him a Stranger to my Blood for ever.

*Pla.* You might have spar'd that just, but rigid Doom,  
 And lest my Love the Glory of our parting.  
 For, Sir, I love your Son ; so well I love him,  
 That rather than I'll curse his gen'rous Passion,  
 By suffering him to bless me with himself,  
 I'll leave my Wealth, Friends, nay, the dear Man for ever.  
 Bear witness, you whose Breasts confess the Pangs  
 Of truest, tenderest, fondest, fiercest Love !  
 Bear witness, Heav'n ! and all that hear me swear !  
 I leave ev'n him, ev'n all that's kind and dear,  
 For endless Grief, a Cloyster and Despair.

[Exit.  
*Fab.*

*Fab.* My Love!—my Father!—both conspire my Ruine!  
Some Angel stop her, and recall your Vows!  
No pity—yes, you're kind, at once you kill me,  
And thus will quickly end the worst of Pains.

*Fer.* Unequal Nuptials show not Love, but Madness.  
If you're my Son, leave this ignoble Creature.

*Fab.* Leave her! ignoble! give me Patience, Heav'n!  
And Duty check my Rage! a Father said it.  
Oh! that you knew her, Sir! you'd see in her,  
That Worth, whence true Nobility began;  
She claims a Birth immediately from Heav'n.

*Fer.* No more. She never shall be yours.  
Haste to *Morella*, Noble, and more Charming.

*Fab.* Ah Sir! I can love nothing but *Placencia*.  
Rather take back the wretched Life you gave me! [*kneels.*  
Draw, draw your Sword, rip up my panting Bosom;  
You'll find a Heart where that sad Truth is written.  
Pity my Youth! pity your Son!—

*Fer.* 'Tis vain—Reason and Time will bring you to your self.

*Fab.* Oh stay! [*follows him crawling on his Knees.*

*Fer.* Away——comply, or never see me more.  
[*Ferd. breaks from Fabiano, and Exit.*

*Fab.* Yes, cruel Father; yes, unkind *Placencia*,  
I'll never see you more——  
You shall not see how wretched you have made me.  
I've one Friend yet, I hope; his Ship shall cast me  
On some abandon'd Shore: There I will dye;  
Pitied, perhaps, by Beasts more kind than Man.  
More wise, more happy Brutes, I envy you!  
With you 'tis Will and Beauty make the choice,  
Ne're crost by the lov'd Female, nor your Syres.  
No dream of Greatness bars your am'rous Joys.  
Curst be the first who made the vain distinction,  
Taught to boast borrow'd Fame from ancient Dust,  
That fancied Distance between equal Emmers!  
Curst be the poy's'nous Notion, and may he  
That slight's true Merit for a vain Degree,  
Love humble Worth, be scorn'd, or curs'd like me.  
And that the Vice an ampler Curse may find,  
Curst be th' Ambitious, which is all Mankind.

[*Exit.*  
*Enter Placencia, as Fabiano goes off.*

*Pla.* His busie Grief usurp'd his very Sight.  
He's gone, and cou'd not see me; wou'd he had!  
Alas! I shou'd, I wou'd have call'd, but cou'd not.

Who

Who will protect me now? — Oh! noble Moor,  
Assist me to preserve my threaten'd Honour.

*Enter Morat and Zemet.*

*Mor.* Can worth, like yours, want a Protector, Madam?  
My best Friend us'd me so to echo back his Sighs,  
When he repeated dying Tales of you,  
That he has fill'd my Breast with the like Zeal  
Of serving you: That Zeal may look like Love;  
But, fear not, Madam, rarely Love gets in  
But at some Chink where Hope had crept in first,  
And I who know how you us'd *Don Vincentio*  
Can never hope this Figure cou'd prevail.  
Then give me leave to serve you, and my Actions  
Shall ne're oppose the Dictates of your Will.

*Pla.* It were a Sin to doubt your Honour, Sir.  
Let your Man wait — and I will tell you Things  
That are yet Secrets to all Souls but mine.

*Mor. Zemet* observe who comes, and give us notice.

[*Exit Zemet.*]

*Pla.* Let guilty Persons blush: I have no Cause:  
The Passion I must own admits no Shame;  
Tho' I confess, I Love: Oh Noble Moor!  
You will have Cause to pity me as much  
As e're you did *Vincentio*.

*Mor.* Do I live? —

[*Aside, and starting.*]

Or have I chang'd my Being with my Form?

*Pla.* What shou'd surprize the Moor? — Sir, tho' I want  
Your help, or such a Friend's, yet let not that  
Divert your Thoughts from your own great Concerns.

*Morat.* No, Madam, these are Fits that sometimes shake me:  
My Soul and Body are by turns at odds,  
And fain wou'd part;

Yet, like false Friends, each strives not to be thought  
To give most Cause for such a Separation:  
But now I'm well again — you say you Love, Madam,  
And that I shall have Cause to pity you.  
Sure, he that is the Cause, is Deaf and Blind;  
Else either Sence, and You, might teach him Love.

*Pla.* Nay, I'm so miserable, worthy Moor,  
That 'twas his Passion that gave birth to mine:  
But, as Fate orders it, all I've to beg,  
Is that you wou'd convey me to some Cloyster,  
Where I may ever weep and pray for him.

*Mor. aside.* Sure 'tis for me, 'tis for the poor *Vincentio*

She

She thus wou'd weep and pray. Oh wou'd it were !  
*To Pla.]* Madam, I'm bound to wait on your Commands;  
 But can there be a Cause for such Despair ?

*Pla.* Too many, Sir, for had not Fate contriv'd  
 To snatch him, and all Hopes, for ever from me,  
 Yet I too well regard his future Glory,  
 E're to have sullied it with my mean Blood.

*Mor. aside.]* 'Tis my self——

It can be no Man else she thus despairs for.

First she shall name me, then I'll own my self.

*To Pla.]* Madam, you may well trust me with his Name,  
 That can be happy thus in spite of Fate.

*Pla.* I will not hide his Name, from one that knows  
 So much of his Concerns : 'Tis——

*Enter Zemet.*

*Zem. Ricardo's coming.*

*Pla.* Heav'n guard me from his sight!——

*Morat.* I'll strive to meet you here again with speed.

Curse on his coming! But why am I troubl'd? [*Exit Pla.*]

By what she said, 'tis plain 'tis me she means.

Revive, *Vincutio*! Doubts and Fears remove!

She must be mine, since she confesses Love.

The Man that's lov'd, of Conquest never fails:

Love pleads, and bribes, and forces, and prevails. [*Ex. Morat.*]

*Zem. Ricardo* seem'd dejected; I'll observe him.

*Enter Ricardo.*

*Ri.* This Mine brings Instant ruine when 'tis sprung;

It rends the main Foundation of my Greatness.

*Sees Zemet.]* Ha! thou black Imp, what do'st thou here?

Hence vanish!

[*Exit Zemet.*]

They and their Papers will so prove the Thing,

There will be no out-facing it——Oh curst Discovery!

This Morning in the Sanctuary I trembl'd.

E're Noon I revel'd as sole Master here:

Yet now, e're Six at Night, these Monks have rung

A fatal Knell to all my new-born Joys.

With this Day's Sun my Fortune rose and falls.

But with the next may it not rise again?

They've giv'n me time to get my Pardon seal'd,

E're they divulge the Truth—I'll have them kill'd—

But how? by this they're in their Cells at Prayers.

No, I must think again——assist me, Hell,—I have it.

At Night for *Africa* I'll Ship the Sisters,

Where I will marry one, and then return.

But why not get *Placentia*? There I'll fix :  
*Placentia* shall be mine.

*Enter Morat and Zemet.*

*Ri.* Hah! ————— *[Starts seeing Morat.]*

*Mor.* Does your Guilt make you start?

*Ri.* Art thou Immortal, Moor?

*Mor.* Yes, Ravisher, all good Men are Immortal.  
 Death is entail'd on none but such as you,  
 Who wear him still about you in your Crimes,  
 Yet justly fear him as the greatest Evil.

*Ri.* *Placentia* has inform'd him of my Threats. *[Aside.]*

*Mor.* Base Man, with Gyant Blood, and Pigmy Honour,  
 I hear thou talk'st of Ravishing *Placentia*,  
 But if thou dar'st but wish it, that bad Soul,  
 That Soul of thine, hard and impenetrable  
 To ev'ry thing that's good, shall be let out  
 To seek its place among relentless Devils.

*Ri. aside.]* Sleep my Resentments! now my Fortune's chang'd.  
*To him.]* I loath the Thought, tho' once I threaten'd it,  
 To try her Vertue; but, since that, my Doubts  
 Are chang'd to admiration of her Worth.

*Mor.* Oh that there were but hopes you yet wou'd mend!  
 I'm bound, and strive to love you, as you're call'd  
*Vincenzio's* Brother, and his Father's Son.  
 In War's brave School, your Father was my Master;  
 Who bad me dare, and taught me how to Fight.  
 He rush'd like Light'ning on firm Troops of Foes,  
 Unnerv'd their Ranks, and shatter'd them to Ruine,  
 And floor'd the Field with honourable Slaughter:  
 But after Conquest, mild as tender Virgins,  
 Protected Vertue in his very Foes——  
 If you'll be Noble, learn to act like him.

*Ri.* I'll learn of you, brave Moor, if you will teach me,  
 Your words can shame and charm us into Vertue.  
 Methinks your Tongue, like glorious Victory,  
 Instils a Soul of Valour through my Veins,  
 And all my Nerves seem knit with double force.  
 I'm now engag'd, but in an Hour,  
 I shall be proud of being taught by you,  
 And fixing you my Friend.

*Mor.* Till then, farewell.  
 Love truly, and I'll give you leave to hope;  
 For as your Love encreases, Vertue will.  
 'Twas Love alone first Civiliz'd Mankind,

And



And dull Instinct to sprightly sense refin'd.  
 In Savage Nakedness Man liv'd and toyl'd,  
 Uglier than Brutes, more wretched, and as wild;  
 Till Emulation to be lik'd and lov'd,  
 Started Invention, and the Man improv'd:  
 But 'tis not Love, weak Bodies to controul,  
 Love only triumphs o're the stronger Soul. *[Exit Morat. and Min.]*

Ri. I'll strive to work thee to my purpose, Moor.  
 Thou'rt brave, but free and credulous to a Fault—  
 For ruin'd *Laura's* good, and more for mine,  
 I with *Placentia* may with equal ease  
 Be wheedled into Marriage! startling change!  
 She little thinks she's great, and I am nothing;  
 Oh! I cou'd rave and bellow Execrations.  
 Hell curse these Monks, emphatically curse 'em—

*Enter Four Bravoes.*

Ri. My Bravoes!

1. *Bravo.* Your Lordship's Servants.

Ri. I sent for you to punish a rude Moor,  
 But I'll suspend a while my just Revenge:  
 I've business of more Moment. There's Gold for you.

*[Ric. gives 'em Money.]*

1. *Br.* Thanks, my good Lord, whose Throat must we cut now?

Ri. There's milder mischief Brooding.

Hire me a Ship, that by use of Oars  
 As well as Sails, may put to Sea this Night.  
 At any rate, by any means I must  
 Have it to Night, and you shall go with me.  
 Succeed, and your Reward shall be so great  
 You shall no longer skulk disguis'd; but live  
 At large, above the scandal of your Lives.

1. *Br.* Conclude this done, my Lord; our Friends will help us.  
 If by fair means we cannot get a Ship, we'll seize on one.

Ri. Success wait on my Friends! *[Exit Bravoes.]*

*Enter a Servant, with a Letter in his Hand.*

Ri. What Letter's this?

Serv. My Lord, 'tis for *Placentia*.

*[Exit Servant, Ric. opens and reads the Letter]*

Ri. Go, I'll deliver it—ha! from *Fabiano*!—  
 How? leaving *Portugal* for ever! Embark this Moment!  
 By my hopes 'tis well!

*Enter Laura.* *[Ricardo seems surpris'd, and puts up the Letter hastily.]*

Ri. Hah! ---my Soul's Joy, I did not expect you here.

*Lau.* I read that in your Eyes, my Lord, but I  
Expected you, tho' 'twas in vain, I fear.  
What Letter were you reading?

*Ri.* 'Tis private business.

*Lau.* I desire to see it.

*Ri.* Wou'd you be made uneasy with my Cares?

*Lau.* Unless I see't, I shall be more uneasy.

*Ri.* Trust me, my Love, you need not, nay you shall not,  
Tho' ev'n from you I must a while conceal it.

*Lau.* From me! Can you conceal it then from me?

*Ri.* Suppose it were a Challenge from a Foe,  
Or a more dangerous Secret from a Friend?

*Lau.* Say rather from a Mistress: false *Ricardo*.

*Ri.* Will you still chide, and without Reason still?

*Lau.* False and Ingrate, I have but too much reason;  
Yer if I chide, I chide but like a Dove,  
In gentle Murmurs. But urge me no longer.  
Give me the Letter, for I rave to see it.

*Ri.* What, will you still controul me like a Slave?  
Will you still claim so insolent a Right?

*Lau.* Traytor to Gratitude, to Love, and me,  
What is't I claim, but leave to be assur'd  
Of thy Heart's Truth, or of its Falshood rather?  
For now I've too much Cause to think thee false.

*Ri.* Your Jealousie, that Jaundice of your Mind,  
Perverts all Objects to it's sickly Colour.

*Lau.* What, are my Charms then vanish'd with my Fortune?---  
'Twas otherwise when this base Rebel languish'd at my Feet,  
Trembling as Guilt, humble as begging Want;  
Charm'd with a Look, transported with a smile,  
And extasied with a reviving Word.  
Love gently rack'd all Secrets from his Breast,  
Made him live more in me than in himself,  
Prevent my very Wish, and open all his Soul.  
Did it not Traytor?

*Ri.* It did, it shall, my Life, then pray be calmer.

*Lau.* And have I made thee Lord of all my Wishes,  
Given thee my Wealth, and my more valued Love,  
To be deny'd a Trifle?

Base Man, dare but be false, dare but deny me,  
I'll Sacrifice thee to my injur'd Charms,  
Tho' thou wert kneeling at the very Altar---  
Give me the Letter.

Ri. Since nothing else will satisfy you, take it.  
 'Tis only from *Fabiano* to *Placentia*;  
 For whom he's leaving *Portugal* by stealth.  
 You see, he begs this may not yet be known——  
*Puzzled.*] Then—I'd a mind—to try your Jealous Temper——  
 And fear'd---it might incline you---to misconstrue  
 My Caution in thus op'ning a Love-Letter  
 To one that's a Dependant on my House.

*Lau.* Hah! sure you love her, or your guilty Mind,  
 Which so long labour'd for a faint Excuse,  
 Had ne're suggested such prepos't'rous Doubts.  
 You seem'd surpriz'd too at my sight; your Face  
 Had scarce the Pow'r to shape a gay Disguise.

Ri. To clear at once my Innocence, permit me  
 To send for her——Who waits?

*Enter Servant.*

*Serv.* My Lord——

Ri. Acquaint *Placentia*, that I'm here, and have a Letter for her.

[*Exit Servant.*]

My Life, from yonder Closet if you please,  
 You may behold unseen  
 Our mutual hatred in her looks and mine. [*Lau. steps aside.*]

*Enter Placentia, Morella, Melinda.*

Ri. *aside.*] She's here! This news will strangely grieve her——  
 To Pla.] You're well attended.

Pla. So we shou'd be to come to you, my Lord.  
 Your Pleasure?

Ri. Here's a Letter from *Fabiano*,——who's fled by Sea.  
 [*Gives her the Letter, she reads it.*]

Pla. Oh killing News!

*Morel.* Poor parted Lovers! how I pity them!

Pla. Is he then fled? fled without seeing me?  
 Fled my *Fabiano*? Oh! 'twas too too cruel.  
 Thy last farewell wou'd pain me worse than Death;  
 Yet I wou'd suffer more for one dear parting look——  
 But sure I wrong thee; we cou'd ne're have born it.  
 How my Soul mourns, Some Dream or Angel tell thee!  
 My Soul! oh no! 'tis fled with thee, and Grief  
 Alone informs this Widdow'd falling Body.

[*falls.*]

*Morel.* Rise, rise, my Dear.

*Mel.*

*Mel.* Sink not beneath your Sorrows.

*Pla.* Let me dye here; for I've out-liv'd my self.  
 Break, throbbing Heart! break now! break! what, not yet!  
 Well, stubborn Life, I'll punish thee for lasting,  
 Melt thee away in Tears, and breathe thee out in Sighs;  
 'Till I'm grown of one Substance with my Grave.  
*She's rais'd* I'll drag thee where thou shalt converse with nothing  
 But Walls, and Heav'n, and Sorrow, and his Image.  
 Off then, gay Dress! vain Pageantry, away!  
 Thou once lov'd House, where my Years rowl'd so smoothly,  
 Adieu for ever! — adieu, my dear, my only Friends!  
 Adieu to all but Grief, and the dear thoughts of him.  
 He's lost, he's lost, and Pleasure is no more.

*Morel.* Let's follow her, and strive to calm her Mind.

[*Ex. Placentia, Morel. and Mel.*

*Ri.* Prevent her going out.

[*Aside to a Servant.*

*Serv.* I will, my Lord.

[*Exit Servant.*

*Ri. to Laura, who comes forward.]* You see the Love between us.

*Lau.* Did I not dread her, I cou'd pity her,

*Ri.* Grieve not for her, my Love.

A Widow'd Nymph of Course a while Despairs,

But nothing dries so soon as Woman's Tears.

Clouds dull the Sun, then fall apace in Rain,

And sprightlier Smiles adorn his Face again.

Such, now your doubts are clear'd, you shou'd appear,

And with kind Looks your Injur'd Lover cheer.

*Lau.* Were those Doubts clear'd —

*Ri.* Unkind! now I must chide. What, Jealous still?

*Lau.* Still Jealous, since still Loving.

*Ri.* But I've a sure way left to ease your Mind.

*Lau.* How? —

*Ri.* Let to Morrow be our Nuptial Day.

*Lau.* To Morrow!

*Ri.* Yes, we'll wave tedious State. Hymen shall bless us.

Oh! let me seal that Promise on your Lips;

Thus, thus your Doubts shall all be lost in Joys,

And kiss'd away as oft as they return.

*Lau.* Shall I still doubt — no, tho' I still had Cause,

I must believe thy dear bewitching Tongue.

Conduct me home, and oh! forgive me, my *Ricardo*.

I cannot bear a Rival in your Heart.

While Woman must to one confine her Love,

Why shou'd Man claim the Privilege to rove?

We cou'd dispense with Change as well as you:

Wo-

Women lose more than Men by being true.  
 Yet tho' you blame our Sex, yours most deceives ;  
 Man leaves us oft, but Woman seldom leaves.  
 Be just then, urge us not to change of Mind!  
 Or give us leave to rove, or be your selves confin'd. [Exeunt.]

*The End of the Second Act.*

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## A C T III.

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*Enter Placentia in a plain white Dress—Morella  
 and Melinda.*

*Pla.* **W**HY am I thus detain'd? Now in this Dress  
 I'm fitted for a Cloyster: Oh! *Fabiano!*  
 Thou leav'st the Land, I'll leave the World for thee.

*Morel.* Oh! grieve us not, by grieving thus your self.  
 Society in Woes will make them lighter,  
 But ours grow heavier while we share your Load.

*Pla.* I'd silence my rude Grief, wou'd it be silenc'd ;  
 But tender Love, Love newly wean'd, and hopeless  
 Will, like all other Infants, pine and rage,  
 Tho' check'd by Reason that denies the Food.

*Enter Ricardo.*

*Ri.* Where, where's the Chaste *Placentia*? Sisters, tell her  
 I'll crown at last the Vertue which I try'd.  
 What, all in Tears? She too in this mean Dress?  
 You feed her Grief. Away! I say, be gone. [Ex. *Mor. and Mel.*  
 Leave Tears and Cloysters, Madam, to those Wretches  
 Whom the World leaves, and who must leave the World;  
 Who surfeit first, then practice Abstinence,  
 Turn Nuns, and then repent their rash Repentance.  
 'Tis true, my Brother's dead, *Fabiano's* gone;  
 But I am left more charm'd with your Perfections.

*Pla.* I pray you, leave me.

*Ri.*



Ri. Look not on me as being still the same;  
Behold your Convert, Madam, 'twas impossible  
To love you, and love Vice, which you detest.  
You, and my change of Fortune, have at last,  
Made me reflect, and rous'd me into Vertue.  
My Threats were but to try you.

Pla. I shall rejoyce, my Lord, to find the Change,  
Tho' tis ill jesting in the shape of Vice;  
"For 'twill be long before I shall shake off,  
"The horror that surprize stamp'd on my Soul.  
In the mean time, I beg you'll give me leave  
In some Retirement to compose my Mind.

Ri. Oh! leave me not, blest Maid, "You're my good Angel,  
"That bear me upwards, govern my best Thoughts,  
"And bid me think of Heav'n, and view it in you.  
"But, if you leave me, e're my Callow Vertue  
"Grows sleg'd, and strong to soar with outstretch'd Wings,  
"Too soon my dead habitual weight of Vice  
"Will make me flag, and fall to worse Perdition.  
"Take me now, save a Soul, confirm me yours.  
"O save me, lest you answer it to Heav'n.  
A Priest, a known Priest, waits to joyn our Hands.  
Oh come! I will not leave you till you've blest me.

Pla. What means my Lord! Oh Heav'ns! what shall I say!  
Yes, I will bless you—if you'll let me go.  
But as for marrying you, forbid it Love!  
Forbid it Honour! and forbid it Heav'n!  
"This wou'd be cursing you, and then my self.  
"Change, rather change this dreadful Love to Hatred!

Ri. I've play'd the Tyrant, but I know you're mild  
As a forgiving Saint. Here on my Knees,  
(But that's too proud a Posture) thus then falling  
With prostrate Body, and more humbled Mind,  
Repentant, chang'd *Ricardo*, begs your Pardon.

Pla. Oh rise, my Lord! 'twas granted e're you ask'd it.

Ri. Oh! add your Love, or let me sink for ever.

Pla. My Lord, I must not, cannot hear you thus.

Ri. Thus have I sworn to kiss your Steps, and dye,  
Unless this Day, this very Day you're kind,  
Stoop to be mine, and condescend to rise.

Pla. Alas! I too have sworn, this ne're shall be.

Ri. I'll beg so earnestly, so humbly,——

Pla. My Lord, I thought you knew *Placentia* better.  
Spare this affected Cringing! 'twou'd be vain,

Tho'

Tho' 'twere not feign'd; for such a whirl of Humour,  
So quick a fall from one extream to t'other,  
Betrays less Love than a Distemper'd Mind.

*Ri. rises.* 'Tis true, I'm craz'd, I'm mad, mad as wild Frenzy,  
To starve my noble Pride, to glut a Slave's.  
Why, cruel Stars, why do I court this Creature,  
This Insect, born to crawl and lick the Dust,  
Till foster'd here, ungratefully to sting me?  
Oh! I cou'd burst, and tear my Flesh with Rage.  
But why do I not rather crush it dead?

*Pla.* Murther! Oh save me! —

*[She wou'd run off, he stops her.]*

*Ri.* None but your self can save, or you or me.

You shall be wretched, if you'll make me so:

"For, good or bad, you now must share my Fate.

This Steel, or else this Juice, shall end us both.

*[Shows her a Bottle and a Dagger.]*

'Tis like the poy's'nous Love I suck'd from thee;  
No Antidote can stop the Bane's Progression;  
It creeps thro' ev'ry Vein, preys on the Blood,  
And ling'ring gives a sure, tho' lazy Death.  
Relent, or now I drink, and thou shalt pledge me.

*Pla.* Oh Horror! hold! let's parley o're our Fate.

Give me some time, my Lord, I beg it on my Knees,

A Month, a Week, a Day; Oh Mercy! Mercy! —

*Ri.* No, it must be this Instant now.

*Pla.* What shall I say? I dye with Terror.

O hold! oh think of Hell, my Lord —

*Ri.* Hell's mild to what I feel.

*Pla.* I can but dye *[He keeps the Bottle close to his Mouth.]*

*Ri.* I've drank the Liquid Death. Now chuse thy Fate.

*Pla.* Oh lost! lost!

*Ri.* Chuse quickly, or —

*Pla.* Oh! give me time to pray.

*Ri.* The Poyson will do that.

*Pla.* I thought 'twas but to try me.

But give it me: 'Tis th' only welcome present

You cou'd have made me, and I thank you for't.

I only wish my dear, my lost *Fabiano*,

Thou cou'd'st have seen these Tears, the best return,

My niggard Fate wou'd suffer me to make thee.

Oh! if a helpless, friendless, dying Maid

May form a wish! oh hear me, hear me Heaven!

H

Let

Let all the dear Man's Sorrows dye with me.  
 And, if another e're can love so well,  
 Let some chaste noble Beauty love him thus,  
 And make him happier than I've made him wretched.

*Enter Fabiano, thrusting away some Servants, and runs to Placentia.*

*Fab.* Hence! Slaves! she's here.

*Pla.* Hah! ———

*Ri.* Return'd!

*Fab.* Yes, here to dye. Look up, my Life, my Soul,

*[He Embraces her.]*

*Placentia,* see 'tis I, 'tis thy *Fabiano,*

*Pla.* 'Tis he; some Angel brings him — my lov'd Lord —

*[She drops the Bottle.]*

*Fab.* My Fate ———

*[They Embrace.]*

*Pla.* Oh! I forget my Fears, my Grief, my very self,

At this dear sight.

*Fab.* Senses awake! and thou my wand'ring Soul,  
 Unwind thy self out of this maze of Joy.

Art thou at large, or in *Placentia's* Arms?

*Ri.* Must I bear this? my Lord, what do you mean?

*Fab.* To kill you, if you dare once more disturb me.

*Ri.* You're in my House, but ———

*Fab.* What?

*Ri.* I'll say no more — I fear his Greatness now, tho' not  
 His Sword

*[Aside.]*

*Pla.* Tho' Love had not betray'd me into Fondness,  
 Revenge it self had don't, to plague this Monster;  
 To make his Eyes drink Jealousies worst Poyson,  
 More gnawing than the Draught he swallow'd now,  
 Or that which he design'd me.

*Fab.* How! ———

*Ri.* No Poyson, Madam, nothing but a Philtre,

A Lover's harmless Trick to fright and win you.

To ease your Mind, I'll send for her that made it. —

And for some others too — *(Aside.)* *[Exit Ricardo.]*

*Pla.* I dread his coming back.

*Fab.* Fear nothing, Madam,

I've a Friend waits without with some choice Men.

*Pla.* I thought I never shou'd have seen you more.

Where have you been? Why did you write that Letter?

Was

Was it to break my Heart? 'twas too unkind, yet I pray'd for you.  
 I wou'd have dy'd, but pitying Heav'n reserv'd me  
 For this blest Moment, e're we part for ever,  
 For we must part.

*Fab.* Part! no, first let the Monarch part with Crowns,  
 The Brave with Honour, and the Saint with Heav'n.

*Pla.* Oh Reason, Honour, Duty!—

*Fab.* Oh Love! Love! Love! great Love against them all.

*Pla.* I've sworn to leave you; nor must I examine  
 Whether I shall outlive the killing loss.

*Fab.* No, you will not leave me: I will ne're believe it:  
*Placentia* loves me—*Placentia* will not let me dye.

*Pla.* Sure Heav'n will forgive this Sally of a Heart,  
 Startled and wild with Joy, this Riot of starv'd Love,  
 Tho' rigid Honour dares not warrant it.  
 Oh! lead me quickly to the Convent, that—

*Re-enter Ricardo.*

*Ri.* She whom I sent for, Madam, will soon tell you—

*Fab.* Nothing that can deserve our stay—farewel—  
*Leading out Placentia.*

*Ri.* Stay, do not lead my beauteous Charge to Ruine.

*Fab.* She's led from Ruine, when she's led from you.

*Ri.* Hold! hear me! for I'll here dispute my Right.

*Fab.* Then somewhere else, and not with Words dispute it.

*Ri.* Tho' now with Words, some fitter time with this.  
*[Shows his Sword.]*

I claim her as my due. I best deserve her.

*Fab.* Who e're pretends Desert, deserves her least.

*Ri.* She's oblig'd to my Family.

*Fab.* But I'm oblig'd to her.

*Ri.* You've nothing; but I've an Estate to give her.

*Fab.* I chuse to lose one for her. But that's little;  
 I'd give the Globe to bribe her to a Smile.

*Pla.* Oh! cease so needless a Debate, my Lords;  
 Nor rate so high a worthless Maid's Esteem.

Know both, I'd sworn, before I knew your Love,  
 Never to wed above my Rank—I'm going to a Cloyster.  
 Then, if you love me, shew it now, my Lords.  
 Be pleas'd to leave me there.

*Ri.* No, Madam, I'll sooner leave the World.

*Fab.* Let me conduct you, Madam.

Ri. Hold!

Fab. Forbear, or in your very House I'll kill you.

Ri. Hah! Will you break the Laws of Hospitality?

Fab. Talk'st thou of Hospitality, and dar'st  
Detain her there? 'tis Sacrilege and Death.

Draw, Fight, and Dye.

[He draws.

Pla. Oh hold!

Ri. Tho' I dare fight, why shou'd I leave to Chance  
What Prudence can secure?

[Aside.

The shortness of my Sword makes you insult, but —

Fab. Give it me, and take mine.

[Fabiano gives him his Sword, and takes his in the Scabbard.

Ri. Take it, and use it if you can: —

Pla. Oh! hold, my Lords!

Fab. A broken Sword! hah! Villain!

[He draws the Sword, which appears to be a broken Blade.

Ri. Stir not, be silent, hear me, and you're safe.

Live happy with my Sister, I with her;

But dye, if you persist t'obstruct my Bliss.

Pla. Oh! wed her, wed her, tho' I dye my Lord.

Fab. I'll yet disarm thee, Traytor.

[Fabiano with the broken Sword strives to close with Ricardo.

Ri. I won't not kill thee! Who waits! —

Enter four Servants, with Swords.

Ri. Seize that Mad-man.

[Fabiano snatches a Sword from one of 'em, and keeps 'em off.

Fab. What, ho! my Friends!!

Pla. Help, Murther! help! —

Enter Captain, with two others, who fight Ricardo's Party.

Cap. Courage, my Lord, we're here! Slaves! Villains! dye.

Enter Don Ferdinand, with Musketeers, who present, and all  
the Combatants cease Fighting.

Fer. Hold! or my Guards shall fire among you.

Ri. 'Tis well you're come at last, my Lord, your Son  
Was forcing his way out with this ungrateful Maid,  
To wed her, and leave Portugal by Sea.

Ferd.



*Fer.* I scarce believ'd the Messenger you sent me:  
 Nay, now I scarce believe my very Eyes.  
 What, my Reproof, my Counsel, my Commands,  
 My Pray'rs, my Threats, my Oaths, all unregarded?  
 It cannot be; *Fabiano* is my Son:  
 My Son would not at once lose Wealth, lose Honour,  
 Lose my Love, lose my Blessing,  
 A Father's Love, and Blessing, for a Trifle;  
 For all this he must lose, or leave this Maid,  
 To wed my nobler choice, the fair *Morella*.

*Fab.* Thus, as to Heav'n, to you, Sir, kneels your Son;  
 And that Heav'n knows, I scarce can reverence it,  
 More than I do my Father. Oh! I'd lose  
 The Life you gave me, rather than your Blessing.  
 But Love, like mine, is deaf Necessity;  
 'Tis Fate it self, and who can alter Fate?  
 If Love's a Crime in me, 'tis its own Punishment;  
 For hope, that soften'd all its Pains, is lost.  
 Then curse me not yet more: alas! your Blessing  
 Is all your wretched Son has left to lose.  
 For soon he'll take his everlasting leave  
 Of Friends, of you, of her, and Life, I hope.

*Fer.* Rise, hear Age speak! *Fabiana*! Wisdom's old.

*Fab.* My Lord, my Father,  
 Oh! let me kneeling thus attend your Will.  
*Fer.* Rise, rise, my Son, nor let thy poor old Father  
 Lose the sole Comfort of his widow'd Years.  
 Thou art my only Child. Alas! I liv'd  
 But by the hopes of seeing thee renew  
 The Glories of our Race, by equal Marriage.  
 Have I for this declin'd a second Choice,  
 And liv'd in solitary Widowhood?  
 Oh! do not hurry thus thy self and me  
 To the dark Grave, and worse Oblivion's Death.  
 I beg it, 'tis thy Father begs it. See these Tears,  
 They're the last drops, the dying hand of Age  
 Has left to dew this drooping with'ring Plant—Oh speak!

*Fab.* Can Nature plead against it self?  
 I cannot speak: my throbbing Heart's too full.  
*Fer.* Then kill me, cruel Son; that Parricide  
 Will be less barb'rous than the other—speak!

*Fab.* Then with obedient boldness I must own; I cannot

(wed *Morella*.)

*Fer.*

*Fer.* Just Heav'n! what have I done? what are my Crimes?  
That I must thus be punish'd with this Son? —

But sure he's not my Son: Such Disobedience,  
Such Meanness, must and shall be Strangers to my Blood.  
Now, as I hate base Thoughts, he's rous'd my Rage.  
Degenerate Boy, thou scandal to my Race,  
Retract thy words, consent, lest, in my Fury,  
I wrong the dead, and ev'n suspect thy Mother.

*Fab.* Oh! use me as you please; but spare my Mother!  
For your own sake, for hers, tread gently on her Grave.

*Fer.* No, she was Vertue's self, but sure some Peasant  
Impos'd thee on me; and displac'd the Heir.  
Be banish'd then my House, my Heart, my Thoughts!  
Be stript of all —

*Fab.* But my *Placentia's* Love:  
You cannot take that from me.

*Fer.* Tortures and Daggers! Wretch, lose all but that.

*Ri. aside to Ferd.]* My Lord, let him rave on.

He's lost all use of Reason in this Fit  
Of Love's high Fever; but it cannot last.  
Leave him with me, I'll watch its Crisis and Declension.  
First, I'll remove the Cause, this fatal Charmer,  
Then soon my Sister shall restore his Reason.

*Fer.* 'Tis well advis'd — Guards stay — obey my Lord.

Curst be this Frantick Love, that rashly hurries  
Unequal Pairs into the Nuptial Noose!

How bitter proves the fair forbidden Fruit!

How lost, how naked Man then finds himself!

How short, how false the Bliss, how long the Woe;

A few good Nights, a thousand dismal Days.

Then the fierce Lover grows a tame dull Husband,

And the kind Mistress a vexatious Wife.

How like an Ass, how like himself he looks,

Wishing to part, more than he did to joyn;

While Wife and Husband curse th' unequal state,

Wedded for Love, then Cuckolded for Hate. [*Exit Ferd.*]

*Ri.* Retire you tempting Mischief to your Chamber.

*Pla.* Oh! rather to a Cell.

*Ri.* Leave that to me.

*Pla.* Oh! once more let me see him.

*Ri.* You shall not see him more.

[*Fabiano who was talking to the Captain, runs suddenly  
to prevent her going out.*]

*Fab.*

*Fab.* See me no more ? then I'm poor indeed ;  
Yes, I will see her, tho' her sight were Death.

*Ri.* Hold ! my Lord.

*Fab.* Forbear ! Despair is frantick ; play not with it ;  
I've lost all hopes but of one parting look ;  
Rob me not of that last, that cruel pleasure.

*Pla.* Oh rigid Fate, why must I thus undo him ?  
" But I my self shall soon be more than punish'd,  
" Lonesome, self-banish'd, buried to the World,  
" My Life shall be a kind of ling'ring Death.  
" Course Weeds my Cloathing, a poor Cell my Lodging,  
" Bare Walls my only prospect, the cold Ground,  
" Or harder Floor, my Bed ; and Grief my End.

*Fab.* " Oh ! why did I come back ! why wou'd I see her !

*Pla.* " Then, if at dead at Night you chance to wake,  
" Oh ! think of me, and say, now poor *Placentia*  
" Is risen in the Dark, and in the Cold,  
" To pray for me, to pray for her *Fabiano* :  
" For then will I be praying on my Knees,  
" That Heav'n may bless you and your future Bride.

*Fab.* Too gen'rous Fair, Oh ! spare your Grief's Profusion ;  
Show me less Love, be cruel out of Pity ;  
Tell me you hate me, I shall be less wretched.

*Pla.* I cannot ; Oh ! then leave me, quickly leave me ;  
Fly my Contagious Grief. Oh ! 'twill infect you.  
I merit not your Care, much less your Love.  
And yet forgive, and let me Love you still.  
As for your Grief, impose it on me, Heav'n !  
For I am grown familiar with Affliction.  
But live, and think your Death my greatest dread.

*Fab.* Then I must strive to live : But oh ! *Placentia*,  
'Twill cost my Love much dearer than to dye.  
If one Hour's Absence made me wild with Sorrow,  
How shall I live, for ever parted from you,  
By Hills and Seas, and the more fatal Cloyster ?  
How bear the Sun shou'd rise, the Sun shou'd set,  
And I ne're blest with my *Placentia*'s sight ?  
Yet fear not, my Complaints shou'd reach your Cell.  
No, not so much as the Tidings of my Death  
Shall give you cause to think there liv'd on Earth  
So lost a Wretch as I.

*Ri.* Take her away, she heightens his Distraction.

*Fab.*

*Fab.* Oh! stay one moment more, then tear me from my self,  
Here let me seal my everlasting Leave.

[*Kisses her Hand.*]

Farewel, thou Innocent, thou blest Destruction!  
Kind Cruelty, sweet Torment of my Soul;  
All that's Delight and Pain transcending Thought;  
My Soul, my Blessing, and my earthly Heav'n.

*Pla.* Farewel.

*Ric.* Part them.

*Fab.* Oh! let me take another parting Look.

*Ri.* Force 'em asunder. [*Ricardo's Servants strive to part 'em.*]

*Capt.* I cannot bear——

*Ri.* Hold, stir not, on your Lives.

[*To the Captain and his Attendants.*]

*Fab.* Hold, impious, sacrilegious Villains, hold!  
Pull, hale, drag, cut, part, tear me Limb from Limb,  
Yet still I'll hold—— she's gone.

[*Struggles with Ricardo's Men.*]

*Pla.* Farewel, thou dear unhappy Man, farewell.

[*Placentia is led off.*]

*Fab.* Wolves, Tigers, Fiends, you shall not 'scape unpunish'd.

*Ri. aside.]* He'll but obstruct me, if he stays—— I'll free him.

*To Fab.]* My Lord, 'twas needful Cruelty to force you from her.

But I'll yet prove your Friend, and free you instantly.

Go travel when you please; I'll not impose

My Sister on you, tho' your Father wou'd.

This private way you may get out unseen.

*Fa. to Ri.]* Tho' I can't thank you, I accept the offer.

*To the Captain aside.]* Captain, once more I'll try to see *Placentia*;

Then I'll aboard your Brigantine again.

*Capt.* My Lord, part of my Men ashore keep close together,

The rest aboard wait for us: All the Slaves

Sit ready at their Oars.

*Fa.* Alas! poor Men!

Tho' they're not half so wretched as my self.

*Ri.* Guards I dismiss you.

[*Ex. Fabiano, Captain, and his Attendants one way, and  
the Guards another way.*]

He's gone, and she's secur'd—— so far 'tis well——

Page, tell *Placentia*, that *Fabiano's* here,

And has prevail'd with me to let him see her. [*Exit Servant.*]

This may decoy her hither—— my Time's short,

Yet I will fetch thee back, and tug with thee,

Thus

Thou shifting Fortune ——— E're thou part'st from me,  
 Resolve to leave some of the spoils I hold ;  
 I will not be left naked ——— *Enter Placentia hastily.*

*Pla.* Hah ! deceiv'd ———

*Ri.* Nay, start not back, he's gone for ever now.

*Pla.* And do you think to keep me here by force ?

*Ri.* Yes, force must act, when kinder usage fails :

I'll give you still an hour : But then resolve

To wed me, or appease my am'rous Rage.

*Pla.* Wer't thou as great, as Lawless Pow'r could make thee,

And I as poor as Nature first design'd me,

Know, rather than I'd serve thy horrid pleasures,

I'd Fly to Desarts, to the Land of Sorrow,

Bear with the want of freedom, light and food.

Nay, I wou'd plunge in Seas, and ev'n in Hell,

But that, I know, thou wou'dst torment me there.

Such is my hate, I'll desperately dare,

And, to shun Thee, all other Curses bear.

*Ri.* Then hear thy Doom. Out of meer Spight I love thee,

Love thee with most inveterate bent of mind.

And thus will hate thee worse ; yes worse I'll hate thee,

When force has gain'd what thou deny'st my Love.

That which will quench my Flame, shall kindle thine ;

Then for the Pleasing Cure to me thou'lt run,

Still close thou'lt follow, but as fast I'll shun :

From wealth, from me, I'll calmly see thee torn,

And leave thee nothing but thy naked scorn.

*Pla.* Hear thou, the surer fate attends thy Crimes ;

In sudden wealth, as sudden a decay :

Then universal hate, in pressing want ;

And, in that want, sickness without Relief.

Thus lingring, thou shalt envy starving beggars ;

Shame and Reproach clogging thy heavy hours.

Then, guilty conscience hurrying on despair,

Hang between Heav'n and Earth, as fit for neither ;

And none Endeav'ring thy curst life to save,

Dye without Tears or Pray'rs, and want a Grave. *Exit.*

*Ri.* 'Tis well thou'rt gone, proud Thing. I'm urg'd so far,

I scarce cou'd hold from making good my Threats.

'Tis yet too soon, but if my plot succeeds

Thou shalt be mine, or bear thy share of Ruin.

If I'm left hopeless, hope not to be spar'd.

No, when I fall unpitied, perish Nature ;

Dye all that's humane in me but Revenge ;



Like a fall'n Spright to desperation driv'n,  
 I'd be more damn'd to keep my Foes from heav'n ;  
 With pow'rful spight I'll all their hopes destroy,  
 And drag 'em downwards with a dismal Joy.

*Exit.*

## ACT IV.

*Enter Morat, and Zemet, who keeps at a distance.*

*Morat.* **T**HE Day's grown old, and almost lost in night :  
 Work in each Street gives way to soft amusements :  
 All Nature's business seems now to be Love.  
 The wind with stronger sighs salutes the Flowers,  
 Descending Clouds embrace and kiss the Earth.  
 And, while the Sun on the Sea's bosome Kests,  
 Th' officious Moon, who winks, with half a face,  
 Lends a securer light to meeting Lovers.  
 For now they meet ; Th' impatient happy youth  
 Sees his kind Nymph come tripping o'er the Plain :  
 They fly, they rush into each others arms,  
 The Lover's Bless'd and rifles all her Charms.  
 Thus eager, but less certain, here I come  
 To seek my better Fate, my lov'd *Placentia*.  
 Make haste, O night, extend thy sable Wings!  
 Let Nature wear a blacker Face than mine,  
 When the Fair owns her Love, and I my self,  
 When with kind Rudeness, I force willing Kisses,  
 Hide, hide *Placentia's* blushes from my Eyes,  
 Or with Excess of joy, the bless'd *Vincenzio* dyes.

*Enter Ricardo, and two Bravoes.*

*Ri.* But are you sure the Ship's at your disposal.  
*1 Bra.* The Brigantine is ours, my Lord ; we could not  
 Get one for any hire ; but seiz'd on this with ease.  
 Most of the men were gone ashore. Besides  
 The Captain is a new revolted Pyrate,  
 Who was as glad of us as we of him. *Enter Servants with*  
*Lights, which they set upon the Table.*  
 Hush ! here's the Moor ! — In half an hour attend me.

*Morat.*

*Morat aside.* Whisp'ring and Bravoës! sure there's mischief  
For once I'll force my self to seem a Villain, (hatching.  
To sift out, and prevent it——

*Ri.* You're punctual, worthy Moor, but why so thoughtful?

*Morat.* I was but thinking

Why men, who know each other to be Cheats,  
Shou'd to their prejudice strive to seem honest.

*Ri.* What, do you think I now dissemble with you?

*Morat.* Why not, my Lord? since I my self dissembled.

*Ri.* How! you? plain-dealing blunt *Morat* dissemble?

*Mor.* We all for Love, Revenge, or Int'rest feign,

And all, for diff'rent ends, seem diff'rent men,

Then shift like Play'rs, and are ourselves again.

Ev'n the most wise, with studied labour, hide,

When flatter'd, Joy; and when exalted, Pride.

Old Maids, if such there be, dissemble youth;

Young Widows, sorrow; Wives and Husbands, truth.

The heir feigns Joy, if his sick friends revive,

Yet almost dyes for grief that they're alive;

The Trader rails at Thieves who Forests range,

Cants, prays, yet cheats, and shakes a whole Exchange.

The Common Jilt, with face and passion feign'd,

Hugs some rich fool, nor leaves him, till he's drain'd.

Dissembling's all Mankind's Prerogative

We know 'tis us'd by all, yet still believe,

And thus are all deceiv'd, and all alike deceive.

*Ri.* I've been deceiv'd indeed. What, wou'd you tempt  
Your Convert to relapse?

*Mor.* Come, come, unmask my Lord, I'm bare-fac'd now,

And know you; know me too; I'm left Executor,

And the Will gives your Sisters and *Placentia*

Most of th' Estate. I've nothing but my Sword;

Command it, and my Pow'r, so I may share

Some of the gain you by my means may reap.

*Ri.* Shall I believe thee true?

*Mor.* Like all mankind, true to my Interest.

*Ri.* Then thou'lt be true to me——

Come to my arms, thou surest, best of friends.

With feeble Oaths we'll not each other bind;

No Tye but Int'rest strongly links mankind.

*Mor.* You love *Placentia*?

*Ri.* I love no Woman, but I lust for all;

And her above the rest; tho' hopeless yet:

But now I've a design, you soon shall know——

Hark, Music!——sure this Serenade's for her;

*A flourish for a  
Serenade.  
'Tis*

'Tis giv'n to near her Window ; let's put out  
The lights ; perhaps we may know more. *They put out the Lights.*

*Morat.* Placentia ! hah ! I find I am not proof  
Against th' intruding Monster Jealousy.

Out of my heart, thou gnawing envious passion !  
Tho look'st so like a Vice, I will not lodge Thee.

*A Serenading Symphony is heard, as from without.*

*Enter Placentia while 'tis perform'd.*

*Pla.* What wretch has chos'n this night for Serenades ?

Alas ! my only Charmer's gone for ever,  
And with him all the Joys these Notes wou'd summon.  
They might as well before Church-windows revel,  
And with unheeded Numbers tempt the Dead.  
Yet have my hopeless wishes drawn me hither,  
Where I unseen may best inform my self,  
Whether, as I suspect, these are not his Musicians.  
Perhaps he's not gone yet, but stays to free me.  
Time was I shou'd have trembl'd thus alone,  
But Grief and Fear itself have made me bold.

*Enter Fabiano, Captain, a Servant, with a dark Lantern.*

Ha ! who are these ?

*Fa.* She's here ; fear not, my Soul. 'Tis your adorer.

*Morat.* Ha ! *(startling.)*

*Ri.* Stir not yet. *(aside to Mor.)*

*Fa.* Take this, thou friendly guide, with my best Thanks,  
And watch to let us out. *[Gives the Servant Money. Ex. Servant.]*

*Pla.* Oh ! I am all surprize. Why wou'd you venture thus ?  
Why, with this Musick ? Is't to punish me ?

*Fa.* Think not those accents meant to move the Soul.  
Oh ! lovely Maid, more Musick's in your name ;  
They're but the mournful Prelude to my Dirge ;  
And serve t'amuse observing Spyes one way,  
That we more safely may escape another :  
For I am come once more to see and free you,  
Then go, where my despair shall neer torment you.

*Pla.* Oh I must share your grief where e're you go ;  
You never can be absent from my heart.

*Morat.* I hope, I dream.  
Is this the love I blest my self withal !

*Fa.* Sighs stop my words.

*Pla.* And Tears obstruct my sight.

*Fa.* Oh ! if you lov'd !

*Pla.* I love you but too well,  
For my Soul's quiet, dear unhappy man.

*Morat.* Oh cursed sound ! he's lov'd ! he's but too happy. *aside.*

*Pla.* Go prosecute your generous Design,  
See foreign Lands, and visit distant Courts!

*Fa.* Since you will have me go, I will *Placentia*:  
But not to Courts. No, I will find some Desert:  
There will I linger out a wretched Being,  
Till grief that nurse of Sighs, can yield no more,  
And with your name upon my Lips, I dye.

*Pla.* Alas, my Wishes contradict themselves;  
I wish you'd lov'd me still, I wish you wou'd forget me.  
Yet love me, love me still, where e're you go.

*Morat.* Racks, Wheels, and Vultures ! — *(aside.)*

*Pla.* Stay, but one moment, I will fetch some Jewels;

“ To pay my Portion to the Monastery,  
“ Then I'll fly thither under your conduct,

For there's no safety here, now brave *Vincenzio's* Dead. *Ex: Pla.*

*Morat.* Oh ! that he were ! — *(aside.)* I can forbear no longer.  
Who are you there, that with false Lights and Vows  
Seek to dishonor noble families, *(Zemet comes up to Morat.)*  
By ravishing young Virgins from their Houses ?

*Fa.* Whoe're thou art, I justly sling the lye back in thy face.

*Mor.* Our quarrel's just o' both sides, if 't be so;

Then let not odds on mine e're make it less,

How many are you arm'd ?

*Fa.* We're only two, yet dare defie you all ;  
Tho, if the Moon's faint light deceives me not, you're three.

*Mor.* That shall not be ; *Ricardo*, now stand by. Draw, *Zemet* !

*Ri. aside.* No, I'll get lights — I hope they'll rid me of a Rival.

*Exit Ricardo.*

*Fa.* Whoe're thou art, tho thy Reproach was base,  
Yet this proceeding's noble. Wou'd we had  
The Sun to light us to each other's face. I wou'd see thine.  
Let's to some fitter place to fight this quarrel,  
For which I know no motive but thy Rudeness.

*Mor.* Yes, there are many ; but my face wou'd show  
By light but little otherwise than now.

I am the Moor, deceas'd *Vincenzio's* friend.

*Fa.* I ever lov'd him ;

And, for his sake, I wou'd not kill thee, Moor.

*Mor.* But he wou'd thee, if he were in my place,  
For stealing thus from him *Placentia's* love.  
But I'll revenge at once his wrongs and mine.

*Fa.* Were he alive I'd not invade his right ;  
And as for thee, how canst thou say I wrong'd thee ?

*Mor.*

*Mor.* Oh! ye immortal Pow'rs! What, have I got  
A talking syllogistick Enemy?

And for a prize great as *Placentia's* heart?  
Know, whosoe'er thou art, I love *Placentia*.  
Will that yet rouse thy Courage?

*Fa.* Hah! Thou love her!

Vile Black! I'll free her from that shame, or dye.

*Morat fights Fabiano, the Capt. fights Zemet, and disarms him out of fight, then (to joyn with Fabiano,) he Re-enters, supporting himself on his Sword.*

*Zem.* (without.) Disarm'd! Curst Chance! Help! Help!

*Capt.* Unlucky Wound! he has hurt me in the Thigh,  
And now I'm useles. [Falls.

*Enter Placentia, who offers to step between them.*

*Pla.* Oh! hold! or know you kill a harmless Maid. [They stop.

*Morat.* Madam, retire.

*Fa.* Leave us a while, dear Madam.

*Pla.* No, here I'll take my death, or hinder yours.

*Fa.* Oh! fly! while this Moor lives, I cannot free you.

*Pla.* Ah! why so cruel, Moor!

*Morat.* I love and will not lose you.

*Pla.* The name of love is poison'd on thy Tongue.

Oh! fully not my Virtue with thy passion.

Can you now think me worth your care, my Lord?

*Fa.* Heav'n can receive no spots from Blasphemy;

But, spight of that, the pious pay their duty,  
And mine's to dye or free you. (*offers to fight again.*)

*Pla.* Oh! stay! hold! if you love your selves or me,  
Who first desists, I'll think the truest lover.

*Fa.* Must I not punish him? *She suddenly interposes and holds Fabiano.*

*Pla.* Yes in my arms——Thus punish him more safely.  
Now, Moor, if thou woud'st kill him, kill me too.

*Enter Ricardo, Zemet, and Servants, with lights.*

*Mor.* *Fabiano!*

*Ri.* How does my worthy friend?

*Mor.* Oh! never worse.

*Ri.* Where are you wounded, Sir?

*Mor.* Oh! at the heart — by killing jealousy.

*Fa.* Madam, till morning I must leave you here,  
And then I'll wait on you.

*Pla.* Oh that's too long, where honour is unsafe.

*Mor.* Let him protect you there, if I am grown  
So fear'd a Ravisher.

*Fa.*



*Fa.* Madam, we will : my wounded friend wants help,  
The Moor is brave, and thus we must be safe.

*Mor. Zemet,* While I retire, stay and observe 'em. *Ex. Morat.*

*Ri.* O do not fear me, Madam : what I threatn'd  
Is far from my intent, 'twas but to fright you  
Into complying. I adore your virtue. [*The Captain is carried in.*  
Oh pardon me, be blest, and make me so. [*He kneels to Placentia.*

*Enter Laura, with her two Children led by Servants.*

*Lau.* Confusion !

*Ri.* Hah !

*They start and look amazedly at each other.*

*Lau.* Ruin'd !

*Ri.* Both, if you stay. (*Aside to Laura.*)

You found me begging here a reconciliation  
Of this fair Enemy, who's wedded to a Cloyster ;  
But I'll withdraw with you, to know what fit  
Usurps your patience, Madam.

*Lau.* No, learn that here.

*Ri.* Oh hold ! retire, or we're undone. (*Aside to Laura.*)

*Lau.* No, perjur'd man. All here shall known my wrongs.  
Despair disclaims Reserves : 'tis as I fear'd ;  
Impatient Creditors drive me from home,  
Just now my goods were seiz'd, and here thy heart.  
All, all, I find, is lost, of what the fondness  
Of my late Husband left me when he dy'd,  
I've nothing now, but these his helpless Infants ;  
These Innocents, depriv'd like their poor Mother,  
Ev'n of a place to lay their little heads.

*Child.* Oh sad ! have we then ne'r another home ?  
I'm hungry, cold, and tir'd, indeed I am.

*Lau.* Oh wretched Children, but more wretched Mother ?

*Fa.* This Scene adds grief to grief, yet tempts to stay :

*Ri.* I share your sorrows, Madam : Let's withdraw,  
You may expect to find a friend in me.

*Lau.* A friend ! how cold, how unlike one he talks !  
And looks, as if I were his Wife already.

I'm lost, he's false ! I saw it. This confirms it.

I can no longer doubt the dreadful truth.

But if Revenge —

[*Looks angrily upon Placentia.*

*Pla.* I dare no longer stay.

*Going.*

*Lau.* Stay, thou invader of my right.

*Fa.* Hold, Madam. (*Interposing.*)

*Lau.* Stay, I'm all patience yet !

Let me peruse you, Madam —

Thou vulgar thing, thou Face mean as thy Birth,

How

How durst thou tempt the Creature of my Love ?

I'm now convinc'd that nothing but a Philtre

Could thus divert his choice from me to thee.

But wer't thou Beauty's Queen, thy charms are vain,

I'd blast them all, my conquest to maintain.

Dare but to hope my slave to disengage,

Not heav'n it self shall shield thee from my Rage.

*Pla.* If Don *Ricardo's* yours, pray keep him, Madam.

I could ev'n hate my self for pleasing him ;

Then think not I'll e're court his odious Love,

Sooner shall freedom doat on Tyranny,

Sooner will I be perjur'd, or he true. [*Ex. Plac. led by Fabiano.*

*Zem. after 'em*

*Lau.* By her Disdain, it shou'd be so. — Just Powers !

Shou'd he shun me, to doat on one who shuns him,

'Twou'd be Revenge, yet heighten my Disgrace.

Am I then fallen so low to seek him whom she scorns ?

*Ri.* I still am true — But hear me. [*aside to Laura.*

*Lau.* No, thou can'st only be thy self, and false.

I've heard too much, I'm cur'd at once and loath thee.

I thought not, I so tamely cou'd have born

Thy change ; but 'tis so poor, I scorn thee now.

Raise my fortunes

High as they stood, our contract shall be void.

*Ri.* Can you mean this ?

*Lau.* Witness it, all that hear me !

*Ri.* Then be it so.

*Lau.* Do you consent ?

*Ri.* I do.

*Lau.* First perish she, thou, I and all the World.

Perfidious Fool ! cou'd'st thou presume to think

I'd give thee leave to live and be another's ?

*Ri.* I was a fool, — for I believ'd a Woman !

*Lau.* And I a greater, I believ'd a Man —

*Ri.* What shall I do ? out of meer pity I must use her ill. [*aside*

Curst be your Love, and your assuming Pride,

Still thus Vexatious, but most curst your Cunning !

Thus do too many of your Sex deceive us ;

For they can feign and lye and weep at will. —

Reserv'dness is a Bawd to their stol'n pleasures,

For, as some wear fine Cloaths with empty purses,

They've but the dress of virtue, not the substance.

Their modesty's as thin, as are their Veils,

Worn alike ev'ry where. but in their Chambers.

Their Reason is a Slave to their wild Passions,

Their

Their honesty to the Desires of Men,  
And their best vertue's damn'd Hypocrisy:

*Lau.* And what's your Sexe's who thus rail at ours,  
To hide your worse dissembling, which all ours  
Is but to Counterplot; while all the faults,  
For which you blame us, are still caus'd by you?  
You, who all promise, and who all betray;  
Who use your stronger sense to ruin our weakness:  
And take a greater freedom to be bad,  
Nay, boast ev'n of more vice than you can act;  
Force us to feign, and live recluse like Slaves,  
Yet damn us for a slip, of which you glory.

You, proud, deluding, treach'rous Tyrant——Men:  
Your very Heroes are but bold Destroyers,  
Your good Companions are but Libertines, *(Walks about*  
And your fond Lovers but designing Traytors. *discontentedly.*

*Ri. to himself.* I find 'tis vain to think t'outrail a Woman.  
I must try softer means.

Trust me, were both undone, if you rave on; *To Laura fol-*  
But if you're calm, I'll double your Estate. *lowing her.*

*Lau.* Cruel, how durst thou thus affront my Love?  
What did I ever wish for, but thy heart?  
Did I desire thy wealth? Did I not give thee  
All I possess and beggar these young wretches,  
Whose sight now fills my drooping Soul with Grief, *(weeps)*  
And sinks my spirits to the lowest ebb;  
For, with our Wealth, our Spirits sink, I find.

*Ri.* Oh check that Love——You know not what you ask.  
Whate'er I seem, I scorn t'undo you more.

I am——Oh! I shall say too much! I swear, *(aside)*  
The dismal truth was on my lips——Farewel—— *(Going)*

*Lau.* Stay! Oh! I dye with shame, but cannot leave him.  
Heav'n's, is this he who swore eternal truth! *(Holds him)*

*Ri.* Do, rail on, curse me, hate me, scorn me, spurn me,  
That I may dare to wrong you, or we're ruin'd!  
Heav'n knows 'tis fate, more than my falsehood, parts us——

*Lau.* Oh racks! oh pangs! oh that we could but deal  
With love, when slighted, as we can with friendship,  
Part company, and love and friendship too.

But 'twill not be——I burst with grief and rage.  
Must I bear this? Is there no way to ease?

My Rival——I'll find her out, and give her instant death. *(Going)*

*Ri.* Hold Madam—— *(Ricardo binds her.)*

*Lau.* Let me go.

K

Ri.

Ri. You must not.

Lau. Prevented! and by thee? Oh my heart breaks!  
My Rage works inwards—help; I faint—I dye?

*Swoons in her Womens arms, and is laid in an Arm-Chair.*

Wom. Oh help my Lady!

Ri. Run to my Closet! I've rich Cordials there——

By heavens I pity her!

*Exit Ricardo's Servant.*

Yes, from my Soul I do. Her Charms, her Love

Deserve a better fate! Oh! I cou'd kill my self,

My most unhappy fickle self! but hold!

Wou'd that relieve her? No: Then live, *Ricardo*,

Live to supply her wants out of *Placentia's* fortune:

But how? while *Laura* lives, she'll still obstruct thee.

"Oh! whither am I driv'n? Thoughts not so far!

"But if she lives we're ruin'd both! a dreadful truth!

"I feel a strange Remorse.

Stay, Life's to her a greater pain than Death.

Then let her dye——

"Down checking scruples. Let me tell my Soul

"'Tis a kind act, and necessary mischief.

*Re-enter Servant with a Case of Bottles, Ri. opens it, takes out one, and causes some drops to be pour'd into Laura's mouth.*

Few drops of this will soon restore her senses——

And in few hours give her eternal rest. [*aside.*]

Woman. How your hand shakes, my Lord.

Ri. Alas! I'm much concern'd for her, poor Lady——  
See, she revives.

Lau. More cruelly to dye.

For, to the wretched, Life's a punishment,

And most to me, lost, hopeless, yet still loving.

Oh women, women, boast your pow'r no more.

How soon our pride's humbled! first we triumph,

But oh 'tis only with more weight to feel

Th' insulting scorn of our Rebellious Slaves.

Weep, *Laura* weep! Think how with this false Charmer

(Checking thy native haughtiness of Soul)

Thou cou'dst have liv'd an humble Cottage mate,

A pattern to all Wives. Yet now he flights thee;

Thou ruin'd for his sake, and unpossess.

Oh let me rave, be mad; tear, tear my hair,

My face, my eyes, curse their weak Charms,

Groan on the ground, and grovel till at last

It hides me in a Grave.

*Throws herself on the ground.*

Ri. Pray, Madam, rise.

There's

There's an apartment ready to receive you.

*Lau.* Away! — Think not I'll stay in this ungrateful House :

No, let me lye expos'd to the bleak Air,  
On the cold pavement, in some lonesome street ;  
A Lodging fit for my forlorn condition ;  
While my poor Children, freezing, tir'd, half famisht,  
With tears and moans pierce the most cruel hearts,  
And with cold scraps feed miserable life.  
Oh dismal, dismal thought ! But 'twill not long torment me :  
I shall run mad, I hope. Yet then, I fear,  
As on my Straw I rave, a doleful spectacle,  
Still with a sigh to all my Sex I'll cry,  
Thus, thus, poor *Laura* fares for being true.

*Ri.* Oh ! how this shakes my Soul ! she shall not dye. (*aside.*  
Run, fetch Physicians — But hold, I'm mad too.  
How will that help her ? — Gently raise her up,  
Then lead her hence to rest. *They raise her up:*

*Lau.* It must be to the Grave then. Wou'd it were,  
So my curst Rival were but there with me !  
Oh how the thoughts of her inflame my Soul !  
May a wrong'd woman's Curses soon o' retake her,  
Wrinkles, Deformity, Desires, and Scorn,  
Detracting blast her fame, worst plagues her Charms,  
Eternal Disappointments, Grief, Disquiet,  
Confusion Shame, and Misery like mine  
Pursue her, and the cause of my Despair. (*Ex. Lau. cum suis.*

*Ri. to himself.* How my Soul's rackt; shame combating with pity!  
Methinks I see her still, and the Banè's working —  
I feel her Pangs, I hear her Groans — Oh horror!

*Enter Bravoes, and Lieutenant.*

*Brav.* My Lord —

*Ri. to himself.* It shall not be ; I'll save her, tho I perish —

*Bra.* My Lord ! He's lost in thought.

*Ri. to himself.* But will that ease her ?

*Bra.* My Lord —

*Ri.* Hah ! — (*Starting*

*Bra.* I've brought the Captain of the Ship : our friends  
Wait with his men without.

*Ri.* I thank thee, Hell ! thou hast determin'd me. *aside*  
Plate, Money, Jewels, and the chief, the Women,  
This very night shall all be shipt for *Afric.*  
*To the Bravo.* Come, let's make all things ready for our flight ;  
Then in *Placentia's* Lodgings seize *Fabiano* ;  
He'll be an Hostage for our future Pardon,



Oh *Laura* ! — But I cannot help thy Fall.  
Necessity makes Villains of us all.

*Exeunt*

## ACT V.

*Enter Placentia, Fabiano.*

*Pla.* OH haste, let's fly, my Lord ! — *Ricardo's Threats,*  
His busie gloomy Looks, his odd Expressions,  
That Lady's wrongs, her Rage, and all things here,  
Must have convinc'd you, 'tis unsafe to stay.

*Fa.* But oh my Captain ?

*Pla.* The danger cannot reach him.

*Enter three Bravoes, who surprize Fab. take his Sword,  
throw it by, and bind him.*

*Fa.* Ha ! Villains ! by whose orders am I seiz'd ?

*1 Bra.* By Don Ricardo's hedeigns no hurt :

As for you, Madam, you must now deliver  
Your Moneys, Plate, and Jewels ; else we've orders  
To take 'em all by force.

*Pla.* Assist me then, Despair ! *(aside.)*

If there's no Remedy, go with me yonder ; *To them*  
You'll find much more than e're your hearts cou'd wish :

*1 Bra.* Search ev'ry where, while I attend Ricardo. *Exit.*

*Two of the Bravoes run to the place pointed to 'em by Placentia,  
she steps out after 'em, locks a door, and re-enters immediately.*

*Pla.* By happy Chance I've lockt the Villains in,  
While eagerly they rush'd to seize their Prey —

I must unbind you, but I tremble so,

I scarce have pow'r to do it.

*[She begins to unbind him.*

*Enter Ricardo hastily, with a Dagger in his hand.*

*Ri.* Hold !

*Pla.* and *Fa.* Halt !

*Ri.* Attempt to free him, and he dyes.

*Fa.* Thus Robbers steal our wealth, then leave us bound.

*Ri.* You're robb'd of nothing since she'd be a Nun ;  
Neither shall you be left, but go with us.

*Fa.* She shall not go.

*Pla.* Villain, I will not go ;

And rather wou'd be wedded to the Plague.

*Ri.* Oh ! how that blush of Rage, that sullen Grace,

That

That scornful smile, now blended with a frown,  
 That soft Emotion, and that wild of Beauty  
 Fire my hot blood ! It mantles, bubbles, boils !  
 My full Veins swell, and the revulsive Red  
 Whirls flushing o're my face. Oh I'm all transport !  
 I must, I will be blest, The coy *Placentia*,  
 Since she'll not be my Wife, shall be my Mistress.  
 Come, quickly yield ! for I'll this very moment.  
 Secure my bliss; lest my design shou'd fail.

*Fa.* If thou'rt a man, unbind and kill me first.

*Ri.* Rave on, and like the damn'd now feel a hell,  
 To see me seize the Heav'n of love by force.

*Pla.* Oh save me, heav'n ! *Ricardo*, think of heav'n.

*Fa.* Hold ! Is the man lost in the lustful Brute ?

Thou lookst a man, then bear thee now like one,

*Ri.* So I intend — Come, with me, or I'll force you.

*Pulls Pla.* while *Fabiano* is striving privately to unbind himself.

*Pla.* Can fruit while immature indulge the Taste?

Oh ! stay ! do not prophane th' unyielding Tree ;

Kind usage and necessity at last

May ripen crabbed hate to gen'rous Love.

*Ri.* I scorn the fruit which of itself do's fall,

I love a pleasure I must struggle for.

*Pla.* Your appetite's deprav'd, your Love distemper'd.

*Ri.* If 'tis deprav'd, and t'other a disease,

Then, sweet or sour, the Physick must be taken ;

Besides, Resistance will enhaunce the blessing ;

Insatiate in the Riot of my Joys,

I'll bribe, or teach, or force you to be pleas'd.

I'll grasp the trembling, panting, struggling Maid,

Grac'd with variety of new disorder ;

Her dress, her tresses loose, and in her face

Roses, and Lillies in alternate chase.

I'll see her beg, and beg, to be deny'd,

With heaving breasts, soft looks, short balmy Sighs,

Kind broken words, and trickling pearly Tears,

While my proud Rival by, sees, rages, and despairs.

*Fa.* Racks, Wheels, and Fires, must I be still restrain'd !

(*striving to unbind his legs.*)

*Ri.* Comply !

*Pla.* I must not.

*Ri.* Marry me then.

*Pla.* Hope.

*Ri.* I hate long Sieges — 'Tis Soldier-like to Storm.

*Pla.*

Pla. But not to storm weak woman! Oh! forbear! *(kneels.*

Ri. I'll stab thee then. *[In a threatening posture, then suddenly*

Pla. I'll thank you. *embraces her:*

Ri. When 'tis done — thou charming stubborn Folly.

Thou Foe to thy own Pleasure — what still foolish? —

Sure I can grapple with you. *(Lord!*

Pla. Oh Heav'n! Crush, crush us both with Thunder! oh! my

Fa. Curst Sight! Death to my Eyes! Hell to my Soul!

I cannot bear it

Blast, Thunder, strick, burn, tear me or my bands! —

Ha! — Now, Fate, I half forgive thee — *Rises, having freed*

Turn, Monster! *his Legs, comes up to Ricardo.*

Ri. Away! fly instant Fate! 'tis in my hand.

Thou mayst more safely tempt the greedy Lyon,

“When with contracted Paws he grumbles o’er his prey.

Be gone! I never threaten twice.

Villain, stab, or desist. *Pushes Ric. roughly.*

Ri. Fond, rash fool, take thy wish! *Offers to stab him. Pla.*

Fa. Hah! What means Placentia? *steps between.*

Pla. To rob you of that blow; I want it most.

Fa. Restraint, your danger, check, distract, unman me —

Oh! my Placentia! Oh Ricardo spare her!

Pla. Oh! my Fabiano! Oh Ricardo, spare him!

Ri. Too long I’ve trill’d — stand out of Death’s way.

Pla. No, strike, strike thro my Heart! still thus I’ll stand,  
Between the dear unhappy Man and Fate.

Ri. The dearer he’s, the sooner he shall dye.

Pla. Oh! take the wealth I now was leaving! kill me!

“Alas my Death will mend my wretched state,

“And I, instead of burying my self living

“Within the lonesom Walls of some poor Cloyster,

“Will lye more quiet in the silent Grave,

“Forgot among the solitary Tombs.

But on my knees, which fear has scarce left able

To bear my Trembling body, by your Love,

By the remaining Tears of this sad day,

By your best hopes, and by your future safety,

Let me adjure you, spare him, spare my honour,

Nor act a Crime you’d wish undone too late.

Fa. Down Stubborn Heart! bend knees! *Placentia kneels.*

A Goddess kneels; but see a greater wonder,

Ricardo! see thy Rival at thy Feet!

Not to beg life! ah no! I wish to dye;

Spare her! oh spare her! Let my blood atone.

Ri.

Ri. Something I feel like Pity ; but I'll hide it — (*aside.*)  
 Or yield, or wed me now, or both shall dye. *To Pla. who*  
 Let go your hold — *holds him by the arm.*

Pla. Oh do no drag me thus !

Fa. Bound as I am, I'll strive to snatch thy Dagger.

*Fa. with both his hands seizes Ricardo's Dagger. They strugg'e.*

Ri. *falls.* She gets his Sword, and points it to his breast.

Ri. Hah !

" Pla. Now, Villain, tremble ! Stir, and thou dy'st.

" Ri. Oh do not kill me — I'm not fit to dye —

" Pla. Nor ever wilt ; therefore unfit to live :

" What shou'dst thou fear, thou'rt all a Devil already.

" Thy lowest fall can be but into Hell.

" Ri. Oh, that's uncharitable !

" Pla. Then that's like thee :

" Infection's busie where you breathe ! Dye —

*Pla. offers to kill Ri. Fa. binders her.*

" Fa. Hold, dear Placentia, let me interpose :

" I'll shield him, but to punish him my self.

" Pla. No, his Sword must let out his tainted blood.

" Ri. Let not blood stain your Innocence.

" Pla. A Monster's blood ne'r stains the hand that sheds it.

" Ri. Can a Virgin do this ?

" Pla. A Virgin wrong'd can more.

" Ri. 'Tis not her office to be cruel.

" Pla. But 'tis ev'ry one's office to do justice.

" Ri. Oh ! you are pious, and you must forgive :

" Pla. Now you can preach that pity you deny'd.

" Ri. Oh ! 'twas excels of Love that urg'd my Crime.

" Pla. Thou never hadst that goodness as to love.

Dye, Virtue strikes, not I.

Fa. Hold, Madam, free my hands ; I'll kill him then.

Pla. Why venture twice your life against a Villain ?

Fa. What can I have to lose, when you are lost ?

Ri. *aside.* I hate this lingring — Thus I'll scape or dye.

*Starts up suddenly, and runs out.*

Pla. Ha ! now he's scap'd, and 'tis our turn to fear.

1 Fa. I'll fly for help, unbind me.

*Enter Morella, Melinda, and two of their women.*

Morel. We've heard a dismal noise — *Fabiano bound !*

Pla. 'Tis now no time to talk ; secure that door.

*They bar the doors on the side where Ri. came out.*

Theft, Rape and Murder are at hand —

Some of you, ring the Bell, it may bring help.

*They*

*They unbind Fabiano, who takes up the Sword.*

*Fa.* Quick, call the Captain : now his wound is bound,  
Tho lame, he may assist. *Exit Serv.*

*Ri. without.* Open the door.

*Fa.* No, not to Thieves and Ravishers.

*Ri. without.* We'll break 'em open then. *(Knocks and wrenches*

*Morcl.* Heaven send us succour first. *without.*

*Pla.* I fear it much. *The Bell is rung.*

*Enter Captain, supporting himself on a stick.*

*Fa.* Why, then I can but dye for you, *Placentia.*

*Cap.* Talk not of dying, Sir, but of defence.

Ler's keep close by the passage,

There we shall better make our party good.

*The door is burst open, the Women shriek.*

*Enter Ricardo, Bravoes, Sailors and Lieutenant.*

*Ri.* Fall on ! *Ri. and the Bravoes fight, Fa. and the Capt. who give way by degrees, till the Lieutenant finding his Capt. there, falls on the Bravoes, and with the help of the Sailors disarms them and Ricardo.*

*Lieu.* Our Captain's here ! fall on the Rogues.

*Cap.* My men are here, beyond my expectation.

*Ri.* Betray'd by cursed Pyrates !

*Cap.* Lieutenant, what's the matter ?

*Lieu.* Our Brigantine, Sir, was o're-pow'r'd by Villains ;  
So many of our men being on shore.

They came upon us so at unawares,  
There was no other help but joyning with them.

I told them I was a revolted Pyrate,  
Who would be glad of such good company ;  
And thus, since that, I've trac'd them in their mischiefs,  
Being resolv'd to seize 'em, when my men  
Were got together, as they are now.

*Fa.* Where is the Moor ?

*Lieu.* We cannot find him yet.

*Fa.* Bind all the Villains, and confine Ricardo.

*Enter Don Vincentio undisguis'd, with Attendants.*

*Vin.* Forbear, presumptuous Lord !

*Fa.* How ! Don Vincentio living ?

*Mel. and Mar.* Hah ! 'tis my Brother's Ghost !

*Ri.* Risen from the Grave ;

*Vin.* Why d'you all shun me ? But perhaps you ought.  
Yet, tho much chang'd, I am Vincentio still.

*Pla.* Alive ! oh grant it heav'n.

*Vin.* You've been impos'd upon, I find.

*Ri.*



Ri. Oh my dear Brother, how I mourn'd for you ! *[Runs to embrace him.]*

Pla. " Come I'll believe he lives, tho'twere a Dream,  
" That I may know one joyful Moment more. *[The Ladies and Ri. run to embrace him, he makes 'em sign to forbear.]*

Vin. Spare Compliments ! It is your love I'd have ;  
When I am sure of that, the rest is needless.

Ri. My Lord, your Ear a moment. *(Ri. whispers Vin.)*

Vinc. I find, there have been strange disorders here.

Placentia, as for you, I hear you're grown  
An absolute disposer of your self.

Pla. Ah can your Soul more than your face be chang'd !  
You did not use to meet our joys this way.  
Oh ! my best Lord ! upon my knees I beg  
That Calumny may not possess your Soul !

Vin. *(aside.)* How am I chang'd indeed ; I can stand by,  
And see Placentia kneel. Oh ! jealousy,  
Thou hast perverted all my noble nature :  
Thou drov'st out flatt'ring hope when most secure,  
And all my Gen'rous passions follow'd it.

Fa. Do's it become Placentia thus to kneel, my Lord ?

Vin. If you dislike her low Condition, raise her !

Fa. So, I can, Sir, and to as high a pitch  
As yours, tho mounted thus in all its pride.

Vin. My Lord, you've in my absence stoln a Jewel *(To F. aside)*  
I priz'd above my life, my very being.

Restore it me again on your Sword's point ;  
And by the Grove where I kill'd rash Don *John.*

Fa. *to him.]* I'll meet you ; say no more—Rise, noble Maid.

Pla. No, I will grow to Earth, except my Lord  
Turns merciful again, and hears me speak !

Vin. *aside.* Hopes of Revenge have beat out jealousy,  
And I'm my self again --- Ah lovely Maid,  
To what but Heav'n shou'd so much Beauty kneel ?  
Oh ! I was mad, Placentia ! quickly rise,  
Or I shall sink into the Earth for shame :  
His words made no impresson on my Mind.

Ri. My Lord, pray keep your Temper, nor suspect me ;  
For I have proofs, I wish the Moor were here !  
He first betray'd their ill designs to me.

Vin. Why then, ye equal judges, hear him speak !  
I am the Moor — do you start, base Traducer ?  
But thou'rt below my Thoughts ? 'Tis you, Placentia,  
I now must chide.

"Why, Cruel fair,  
 "Why will you thus shut out your lovely self  
 "From all the World ? I prize no other Wealth,  
 "And wou'd you, wou'd you steal your self from him  
 "Who without you must dye ? for oh *Placentia*,  
 "None can divide the Body from the Soul.  
 "Yet make that Body live.

*Pla.* "Alas ! Vows firm as fate for ever part us.

*Vin.* "Yet stay, That I may see you shine at Court.

*Pla.* "Ah no ! my Lord, vertue shines best in Cloysters.

*Vin.* "But oh ! if you're resolv'd to live recluse,

"And make your fond *Vincentio* miserable,

"Why must another offer you to Heav'n ?

*Pla.* "You shall dispose of me,

My Lord, my heart

Is by a secret charm bound to *Fabiano*,

But yet, its Duty must be wholly yours.

*Vin.* Oh ! break that cursed charm, or else deny

All thoughts that prompt a friendship or respect.

Respect was welcome from you, when I thought

None had a stronger Tye upon your Soul:

But that respect is now below contempt.

*Pla.* Oh ! tho I love him—

*Vin.* Oh unspeak those words.

Ten thousand Vipers stung me at the sound ;

Ten thousand thoughts, all wild, all black, all dismal,

Work my mad Brain. Oh, say you love him not.

You weep—you are dumb—you will not? Cruel Maid !

Teach me, yet Pow'rs to move her—Oh I wou'd invoke

Men, Angels, Friends, to wrest him from her heart :

But 'twill be vain : how long have I not su'd ?

Hours, Days, Months, Years, are past ; yet still she's Marble.

I'll dye then——yes ; but first my Rival shall.

I'm ripe for ruin, like some batter'd wall,

But haughty Foe, I'll crush thee with my fall.

*Fa.* Kill me, I'll thank you ; for I'm hopeless too.

But live, my Lord, and think me not your foe.

Nothing but barbarous wrong done to *Placentia*

Cou'd make me draw my Sword against my friend.

*Vin.* Must I be wicked e're I can be eas'd ?

Take, take your friendship back. Oh why am I thus curs'd ?

My Brother a base wretch, my Friend my Rival,

And what's yet worse, a Rival lov'd ! Oh Tortures !

But what most racks my Soul, this very evening

I thought my self the happy'st man on earth.  
 From such a hope, in full career to bliss,  
 Thus to be hurried down a precipice  
 To dash on deep despair ! It kills my reason,  
 Confounds my Brains, my Heart, and tears my very Soul.  
*Flings himself on the ground.*

*Pla.* Compose his mind, good Heav'n !

*Morel.* Rise, my dear Brother.

*Mel.* Oh why will you lye thus ?

*Vin.* Oh why indeed indeed ! my sword, my sword shou'd  
 end me and my pain. *[rises and draws his Sword.]*

*Fa.* Hold ! are you mad ? *[Takes his Sword from him, and  
 Let Reason end 'em, and preserve your Life. others hold him.]*

*Vin.* Away ; Life's my worst foe, and you the next ;

Think not t' impose it on me. Reason's self,

Nay Patience, says my ills are past her cure.

Oh hardship ! I'm ev'n deny'd the priviledge of dying.

Then hear, thou heav'n ! why sleeps thy thunder ? end me !

Delay not thus my wish for Dissolution.

Oh rid me of Intolerable Life.

*Fa.* Forgive your Friends, and live my Lord.

*Vin.* My Friends ! wou'd you be thought my Friend ?

*Fa.* Yes, from my Soul.

*Vin.* Then dare be such, and rid me now of Life.

*Fa.* Wou'd that be like a Friend ? Reflect, my Lord :

Exert your Soul, and bear like your great self.

*Vin.* Will you not kill me then ?

*Fa.* Were ev'ry door to ease shut up but Death,  
 Unwillingly I wou'd.

*Vin.* There is no other.

*Fa.* Then I must be cruelly kind. *(draws his Sword.)*

*Pla.* My Lord—

*Fa.* Madam forbear ? Let one friend ease another.

*Vin.* Well said ?

Come, take your Sword my Friend, and lay its point close to  
 my Breast ? *(Fa. gives him back his Sword.)*

That when I do you the same hated Office,

We both may fall at once.

*Vin.* What, both ! forbid it friendship !

I dare not buy my ease at your Life's Cost.

*Fa.* See, whither passion hurried you, my Lord !

Were wilful Death an ease, shou'd you deny it him

That gives it you ? for I too am most wretched.

But Life's the Gift of Heav'n, and we must wait

Till heav'n commands it back, to gain a better.

*Vin.* Oh ! you have touch'd my Soul ! Come to my Arms !

I'm reconcil'd to wretchedness, to Life,

Nay, ev'n to you : Tho Rivals we'll agree :

Let's all three joyn as partners in affliction.

Till heav'n be mov'd, while nature mourns to find

Three hearts so wretched, yet so truly kind.

*Enter Zemet.*

*Zem.* My Ld, Don Ferdinand, with guards was forcing Entrance,  
But, hearing you're return'd, wou'd only kiss your hand.

*Fa.* My Lord conceal me, lest I be detain'd.

*Vin. to Fab.* Retire into that Room. Go bring him in. *(To Zem.*

*[Exit. Fa. and Zemet severally.]*

*Enter Don Ferdinand, with Zemet with him.*

*Fer.* Welcome, my Lord, to Portugal, that mourn'd

The brave *Vincenzio's* loss ! The King himself

Has worn a noble sorrow for your Death ;

And doubtless will rejoyce, to see you contradi&

That most unwelcome news.

*Vin.* I must employ my Friends, my Lord, for a new pardon,

'Twas I that caus'd the Rumour to be spread ;

But 'twas to save a Brother.

*Fer.* He's no Brother.

*Vin.* My Lord, he's but an ill one, I confess :

Yet, nature still will work.

*Fer.* I'll say no more, till I have got your promise, of one thing.

*Vin.* Name it, my Lord ; a gift that you can ask

Must needs be too well plac'd to be deny'd.

*Fer.* I had a Son ; and hope once more to have him,

If this fair Lady will restore him to me,

Once I despis'd her, but admire her now.

I ask her for his Wife, my Lord, that's all.

*Vin.* All ! — ask me my Lord, to rip my breast my self,

And give you thence my heart. Ask any thing,

Rather than ask *Placentia* for your Son.

She must be mine, or no man's in the World.

*Fer.* My Lord, she is your Sister.

*Vin.* Hah ! my Sister.

*Ri. aside.]* Nay then 'tis time to fly : These perjur'd Monks,  
Tho he's not dead have made the secret known.

*Fer.* Lay hold on him ! — *(going is stop'd by the Lieutenant.)*

*Enter the 2 Monks.*

This Villain, shall no longer be your plague.

*1. Monk.* No, he's a peasants Son, and she your Sister.

*Vin.* Can Heav'n and Earth conspire to make me wretched ?  
Sister,

Sister, that word ne're founded ill till now.

Sister brings in't eternal separation.

Fathers, you shou'd be Messengers of joy.

1. *Monk*. I hope, My Lord, we shall, if you'll but hear.

*Vin*. Let me hear any thing but Sister from you.

That fatal sound will murder me at once ;

I dare not understand you.

But since I'm doom'd to hear some dreadful story ;

'Tis fit I shou'd possess my Soul with Thoughts

Of the most dismal kind ! — I need not study.

*Placentia* Loves another — That's enough.

Alas ! what Racks, what tortures can be worse !

Now tell the rest — yet on the Ground I'll lye

Left I drop down, when she is prov'd my Sister.

There, wretched Lover, measure out thy Grave. [*Throws him*

Now strike the blow that must cut off all hopes. *on the ground.*

1. *Monk*. Read that, my Lord ! It is a declaration

Under his Parents hands.

*Gives Vinc. a paper.*

*Vin*. This is enough — *Placentia* is my Sister. Oh ! my heart !

Turn, turn thy self about, that I may ask

Why this was done ?

1 *Monk*. My Lord, you've heard your sickly Infancy

Gave but a doubtful promise of your Life.

This made your Father wish another Son.

But Daughters still deceiv'd him. Now your Mother

Then big with Child, had heard him rashly say,

If that too prov'd a Daughter, he should wish

She never had been his.

This made such an impresson on her mind,

That to preserve his Love, he being absent,

Seeing it prov'd a Girl, she chang'd the Child.

This fault her youth committed, and her age repented.

So she with us deposited this Trust,

To be reveal'd, if you dy'd without Issue.

If not, to be kept secret. But just heav'n

Has brought the secret out before its time.

Yet with no breach of trust on our side neither,

Since we believ'd you dead, when we reveal'd it.

*Vin*. Have I not patience, fathers, thus to hear

Such killing news, yet lye here without raving ?

But I'll do something too. [*Starts up and Exit. Monks and Servants*

*Pla*. Look to my Lord !

*after him.*

*Fer*. Alas ! he's much disturb'd — As for these Villains,

To dungeons with them. But for this mock-Lord —

Degrade.



Degrade him first. Strip of this rich garb,  
Then Cloath him as befits his state and Birth.

[*Ex. Sayers, Bravoes and Ricardo.*]

That thus my Lord may see him dragg'd to prison.

*Morel.* Oh Sister ; 'tis more joy to find you thus,  
Than 'tis to lose that wretch.

*Pla.* This doubles the delight I took in Friendship,  
But my Love for you was so great before, it cannot now encrease.

*Re-enter Ricardo, in an old Gown with Attendants.*

*Ri.* Now, Fortune, Nature,  
I owe you nothing but a wretched Being.

Take back the thankless gift, and then we're even,

" Nor rack my Soul with dread of endless Flames.

There's Hell enough on Earth in guilty minds.

" To lose at once the heav'n of Love and Greatness,

" Then be condemn'd to Life, or dye a branded Villain !

" Curst Thought ! a branded Villain. Ha ! I feel

" A warmth new to my heart, thaw the hard lump,

" And shake my shudd'ring frame.

Oh my past Life, thou mak'st me doubt the future.

Alas, I dare not hope I may repent.

*Laura & Oh run, for pities sake ! she is poyson'd.*

Get Antidotes ! But tell her not, I did it.

*Fer.* Run, help the Lady.

(*Exit Servants.*)

*Ri.* Oh ! lead me from her Sight, to Chains and Gallies,

To toyl, to shame, to want, to pinching cold,

To scorching heat, to stripes, to worse Remorse,

And ever-new variety of Woes.

All, all these pains are slight, to those I bear,

Struggling for hope with horror and despair.

*Laura in the passage.* Stay ! Poys'ner Fiend, ! take this and this.

(*Exit Ricardo bloody, Guarded by the Lieutenant, &c.*)

*Ser.* Hold, Madam.

*Pla.* More horrors yet ! oh let's avoid that Sight. *Ex. Pla.*

*with Fer. Morel. and Mel.*

*Enter Laura and Richardo. She holds a Dagger in her hand,  
and drops it as she struggles with the Servants.*

*Lau.* Why do you hold me ? let me end that Monster !

*Ri.* Strike, injur'd Goodness ; strike again ; I'll thank you.

" Compleat the work of Death, that moves too slow.

" But oh ! first hear me, take some Antidote.

*Lau.* Must I be held, and punish't with his sight ?

" Free me, or take him hence, for horror shakes me

" Ev'n at the thoughts that he's of humane form.

*Ri.*

*Ri. be kneels*) Oh stay ; look on the most undone of Creatures,  
A Devil in guilt, but a repenting Devil.  
Oh ! cou'd but heav'n and you forgive.

*Lau.* Avant — Devils can't repent, nor be forgiven.

*Ri.* But ev'n the worst of Men, thus prostrate trembling,  
Not daring to look up, near death, will sigh to heav'n.

" Oh ! you're so much its likeness,

" Sure its best attribute, Divine forgiveness

" May yet be show'r'd ev'n on a wretch like me. .

" A Wretch, more, more than a wretch, there's not a name

" That can expresse my miserable state.

*Lau.* Let go my Robes,

*Ri.* Oh never, never,  
The drowning wretch cannot forego his hold ;  
That lost, I sink for ever.

" *Lau.* I'd sink with thee, that thou might'st sink yet lower.

" Think on my wrongs, thou Fiend, thy breach of Vows,

" Ingratitude, that ev'n thy Sex must startle,

" Poyson thy kind return for all my wealth,

" For all my Love, and what cries most for Vengeance,

" Those poor young Orphans ! Oh my ruin'd Children.

*Ri.* Oh ! take some Antidote !

*Lau.* No, I wou'd dye : what shou'd I live for now ?  
See behind me nothing left in Life  
I ut misery, terrible misery.

*Ri.* Oh *Laura* —

*Lau.* Wil't thou still plague me ? Dye, and let me dye.

" *Ri.* Oh ! had you heard me, but an hour ago,

" We might have liv'd. Alas you little know

" What's now divulg'd ; I'm not *Vincenzio's* Brother.

Death to a wretch like me has lost its horror ;

Death shou'd have snatch'd me in my fancy'd greatness ;

But now my base original, my Crimes,

My shame call for severer punishments.

The Rack shou'd stretch my Limbs, and show me death in view,

Then pull the blessing back, that I might long be tortur'd.

Then let me starve with those poor helpless Orphans,

Whom I have robb'd of the support their dying Father left.

" *Lau.* Oh now thou'st touch'd my Soul,

" And laid my Crimes as well as thine in view.

" I, I, was left entrusted with the Care.

" How shall I meet my Husbands shade ? methinks

" I see his angry Ghost ! he frowns — oh hide me.

" For.

"Forgive, blest soul ; forgive a poor deluded Woman! ——

"But oh ! my Children, how can you forgive me ? ——

"Yet once more let me see 'em——stay ; I dare not, ——

"Oh dismal face ; a dying mother dreads to see her Children.

*Ri.* Oh not to you, to me they owe their Ruin ;

"On me, on me alone shou'd Vengeance fall.

"Add to my torments, heav'n, so they have ease.

"Oh ! tho' she curs'd me still, tho' she ne're knew

"'Twas for their good I strove to wed *Placentia*,

I'd bear an age of Hell to mend your fates.

*Lau.* Amazement ! his guilt lessens. Can it be ?

He pities me, pities my Children too.

Take back thy pity, take it back, *Ricardo*.

It gains so much upon my easy heart

That I shall wrong my self, and give thee mine.

*Ri.* Pity'd ! am I then pity'd ? oh ! thou goodness,

If thou can'st pity, sure thou can'st forgive, ——

But oh the poyson ! That must wake Heav'n's Vengeance,

And seal the ears of mercy ;

*Lau.* 'Twas Charity to kill me : but thy falshood

Was a worse poyson to my doating heart ——

Yet we've all faults. Alas, we all want mercy ——

We must forgive, —— heav'n pardon thee, and me !

*Ri.* What do I hear ?

*Lau.* But fly ! my Children's sight may force forgiveness back.

*Ri.* Is that forgiveness ? see, I bleed apace.

Oh pardon, e're I dye.

*Lau.* Oh ! I've a vice of mercy in me.

*Ri.* Let me Embrace your Knees, breath out my Soul. [*Embraces her knees.*]

*Enter Children.*

*Lau.* My Children ! off, away. [*pushes him away.*]

*Ri.* I dare not see 'em, and I cannot leave her !

*throws himself on his Face.*

"*Lau.* Away, you dear fond wretches. Why d' you cling ?

"I've ruin'd you ; but oh ! I'm ruin'd worse.

"Poor Innocents, they little know their misery,

"I feel it double for them, wretched Mother.

Oh had my Woes fall'n only on my self,

I'd think 'em gentie, but this worse affliction

Intail'd on you, poor helpless guiltless Orphans,

It turns my Brains, distracts me——'Tis too much.

Oh dreadful change ! oh vanity of life !

Death

Death is the only blessing a fond Mother [*She falls, and then she sees the Dagger by her and takes it up privately.*]

Can with her dearest Children——ha! the Dagger.

Do's not Fate hint by this, I ought to ease 'em?

Must they be left, to want? to beg? to starve?

I'll do't; but oh what Arm can hurt such sweetness?

I cannot strike——I cannot bear their Look:——

But must they live to curse me, shame their name,

And dye perhaps an ignominious Death?

No, I must strike——

1. *Child.* Pray, mother, don't look so, indeed it frights me.  
Oh pray be'n't angry! oh I'll hug and kiss you.

*Lau.* Away, we're ruin'd, and we ought to dye.

1. *Child.* Oh my dear Mother, live; We'll beg for you.

*Lau.* Beg! cou'd you Beg?

1. *Child.* Yes, for your dearest mother.

*Lau.* Oh this disfarms me. Live, my dearest Children——  
Live and be happier, you instruct your Mother, (*She throws away the Dagger and embraces her Children.*)

And I too ought to Live--If there be means--but oh the poison  
It works, hah! it shoots Hell into my Blood!

I am all wound. My head; my breast! I burn!

Heart, I cleave my sides! Brains, burst my skull! help! help!

Oh gently, gently!—— (*They offer to help her.*)

"*Ri.* Oh horror! Curse thy sufferings off on me,

"Thou martyr'd Goodness——hurl your Bolts, you Powers!

"Grind, grind me into dust,

"And on each atom double all her pains.

"So *Laura's* eas'd, *Ricardo* will not murmur!

*Lau.* Oh! give me ease! where's Death?

The Coward dares not come, affrighted at my torments.

My Br<sup>o</sup>th's a fire. Help! Water, Ice! Heav'n, pity me.

Give me some of the cold my Children are to suffer.

*Lieut.* Take hence these innocents, too much they move.

*Lau.* Oh pity them——I call'd on Death, and lo, he's come  
at last.

But oh the thoughts of them, makes me now welcome him.

With that sad heaviness that sinks despairing Sinners.

Oh Heav'n!——Oh my Children!——

(*Dyes.*)

*Wom.* She's dead, she's dead.

"*Ri.* Hah! and do I still live?

"Be dry my Eyes, and you, my Wounds, weep faster.

"Oh let me look, and sigh my last at once.

Oh killing sight: when shall I overtake thee,

M

Thou.

Thou only fair ? Oh ! never, never, never.

'Tis not for guilt like mine to mount with thee :

I feel my self in Hell, and mercy's self

Can never stoop so low.

" Fain wou'd I pray—ha ! a Grim Vision frights me.

" Oh heav'n ! oh save me ! hah ! a hand is stretcht

" To raise me up to heav'n, let me get hold——

" But oh ! dark vapours rise between—— I cannot see it.

*Re-enter Ferdinand, and a Servant.*

No News yet of *Vincentio* ?—— Oh most dismal sight !

*Fer.* Remove that Scene of Grief---force off that wretch.

*Ri.* Oh you shall never part us---No, I will, I will  
Bejoyn'd with her at least in Death !—— Oh *Laura* ! *Laura*.

*(Laura is carried off, Ricardo follows, holding by the garments,  
but is forced off, faints, falls and is carried off.)*

*Fer.* A doleful Scene ! but where's my Lord *Vincentio*.  
I dread some greater mischief from his Stay.

*Enter Zemet.*

*Zem.* Run, find *Placentia* ? Don *Vincentio*'s coming,

A Conqu'ror o're his noble self at last. *(Exit Servant)*

He brings my Lord *Fabiano* to be blest.

*Fer.* My Son ! *Enter Vincentio and Fabiano at one Door.*

*Placentia, Morella, and Melinda at the other.*

*Vin.* Love's sacrific'd at last to Reason, Take her,  
She's yours, my Lord.

*Fa.* Oh 'tis too much at once---oh rapture---oh *Placentia*.

*Pla.* Oh my lov'd Lord !—— *[He embraces her.]*

*Fa.* My Life ! my Soul ! oh I am lost in Bliss, and suffer with  
Thou kind omnipotence, forgive my doubts, *[delight.]*

I thought thou cou'dst not thus have blest a mortal ——  
My Lord, my Father ! *[kneels to his Father.]*

*Fer.* Oh my dear Son, be blest, and let my tears  
Now speak my Joy as once they did my Grief.

*Vin.* Thus Providence has wrought my desperate cure.

Oh ! you, no more my Mistress nor my Rival,

Live happy. Long be crown'd

With blessings which no single state can give.

My heart has fed so long on hopelefs Love

That it wou'd surfeit, shou'd it feed on other.

Glory shall be my Darling Mistress now.

Off then, soft frenzy ! let me rouze my Soul.

In martial Fields let Fame possess it whole :

While all who know, whence sprung these dangers here,

Learn from small Crimes great mischiefs to beware. *Ex. Omnes.*

F I N I S.



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